Friendſhip in Death:

IN 1486. df. 41.

TWENTY LETTERS

FROM THE

DEAD TO THE LIVING.

To which are added,

LETTERS

MORAL AND ENTERTAINING,
IN PROSE AND VERSE.

IN THREE PARTS.

BY Mrs ELIZABETH ROWE.

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M. DCC. LXXVII.

TO

DR YOUNG.

SIR,

I Have no design in this Dedication, but to express my gratitude for the pleasure and advantage I have received from your poem on the LAST JUDGMENT, and the *Paraphrase on part of the book of Job.*

The Author of these *Letters* is above any view of interest; and can have no prospect of reputation, resolving to be concealed. But if they prove serious entertainment to persons whose leisure hours are not always innocently employed, the end is fully answered.

The greatest infidel must own, there is at least as much probability in this scheme, as in that of the *Fairy-Tales*; which, however visionary, are some of them moral and entertaining. *I am,*

SIR,

Your most humble servant, &c.

534/10

THE PREFACE.

THE drift of these Letters is, to impress the notion of the soul's immortality; without which, all virtue and religion, with their temporal and eternal good consequences, must fall to the ground.

Some who pretend to have no scruples about the being of God, have yet their doubts about their own eternal existence, though valuable authors abound in *Christian* and *Moral proofs* of it.

But since no means should be left unattempted in a point of such importance, I hope, endeavouring to make the mind familiar with the thoughts of our future existence, and contract, as it were inwards, an habitual persuasion of it, by writings built on that foundation, and addressed to the affections and imagination, will not be thought improper, either as a doctrine, or amusement: *amusement*, for which the world makes by far the largest demand; and which, generally speaking, is nothing but an art of forgetting that immortality, the firm belief and advantageous contemplation of which *this* amusement would recommend.

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LETTERS

FROM THE

DEAD to the LIVING.

LETTER I.

To the Earl of R——, from Mr ——, who had promised to appear to him after his death.

THIS will find you, my Lord, confirmed in your infidelity, by your late disappointment. It was not in my power to give you the evidence of a future state, which you desired, and I had rashly promised; but since this engagement was a secret to every mortal but ourselves, you must be assured, that this comes from your deceased friend, whose friendship you see has reached beyond the grave.

In my last sickness, we fixed on the time and place of my appearance. You was punctual to the appointment: for though I was not permitted to make myself visible, I had the curiosity to know if you had the resolution to attend the solemnity of a visit from the dead. The hour was come; the clock from a neighbouring steeple struck one; no human voice was heard to break the awful silence; the moon and stars shone clear in their midnight splendor, and

glimmered through the trees, which, in lofty rows led to the centre of a grove, where I was engaged to meet you.

I saw you enter the walks, with a careless incredulous air; not the least concern or expectation appeared in your looks; as if you came there only in regard to your own word, and a sort of respect to my memory. However, the calmness of the night induced you to walk till the morning began to break, when you retired, singing an idle song you had got out of the *Fairy Tales*. By the gaiety of your temper, you seemed pleased, my Lord, with a new proof against a future life, and happy to find yourself (as you concluded) on a level with the beasts that perish—A glorious advantage! and worthy of your triumph!

But we have so often discoursed on this subject, that I would not tire you with the repetition of any thing past; only once more, to make way to your reason, by moving your passions, in recollecting the manner of your brother's death, which was all a demonstration of the immortality of the soul, and to what heights of fortitude that prospect could raise the heart of man, at the hour of terror, and in the jaws of death.

With what a ready composure did he endure the violence of his distemper! with what conviction and full assurance expect the reward of his piety! with what a graceful resignation did he receive the sentence of death, when (at his importunity) the physicians told him there were no hopes of his recovery! "Then I have but a few weary steps," he replied, "and the journey of life will be finished."

This was not a time for affectation. All was open undissembled goodness, and a true greatness of mind. Nothing else could have supported him, when every circumstance of life conspired to allure him back to life, to deepen the shadows of the grave, and make the king of terrors more terrible.

There was not, my Lord, among the race of men,

a more lovely and agreeable perſon than your brother. His marriage was juſt concluded with the charming Cleora; he had juſt finiſhed a noble ſeat, and fine gardens to receive her. When he was near death, ſhe came at his requeſt to take a laſt and ſad farewell. Angels might have ſorrowed to ſee tears in the brighteſt eyes on earth; while her tenderneſs for him would have diſguiſed her anguiſh. This, with the ſight of a fond young ſiſter, fainting in her woman's arms; your aged father ſitting near, ſilent and ſtupid with his grief: what could ſupport the mind of man in ſuch complicated diſtreſs! The accompliſhed youth, who had all that was gentle and humane in his diſpoſition, muſt have betrayed ſome weakneſs, if he had not been aſſiſted by a power ſuperior to nature. But how equal, how ſteady was his mind! how becoming, how graceful his whole behaviour! Never was the laſt, the cloſing part of life, performed with more decency and grandeur. His reaſon was clear and elevated, and his words were the very language of immortality, and excited at the ſame time both *pity* and *envy*, in thoſe that were near him.

When the cold ſweats hung on his brows, and his breath and ſpeech failed, joy ſtruggled through the decay of nature, and a heavenly ſmile ſat on his face; a ſmile that at once compelled our tears, and accuſed us of weakneſs in them.

You, my Lord, attended him to the laſt moment of life: and when I preſſed this argument of a future ſtate, you confeſſed, that tho' you thought religion a deluſion, it was the moſt agreeable deluſion in the world; and that men who flattered themſelves with thoſe gay viſions, had much the advantage of thoſe that ſaw nothing before them but a gloomy uncertainty, or the dreadful hope of an annihilation.

From this uncertainty I was very ſolicitous to draw you, while I was in a mortal ſtate; but I have now a more ardent deſire to convince you, though I cannot obtain the permiſſion to give you that evi-

dence you requested. However, this letter may satisfy you that I am in a state of existence; nor is an apparition from the dead a greater miracle than a variety of objects that daily surround you, and owe the loss of their effect to your familiarity with them.

Happy minds in this superior state are still concerned for the welfare of mortals, and make a thousand kind visits to their friends; to whom, if the laws of the immaterial worlds did not forbid, it would be easy to make themselves visible by the splendor of their own vehicles, and the command they have on the powers of material things, and the organs of sight. It often seems a miracle to us that you do not perceive us; for we are not absent from you by *places*, but by the different conditions of the *states* we are in.

You will find this in your closet, and may be assured it comes from

Your constant
and immortal friend,

Clerimont.

LETTER II.

From a gentleman who died at Constantinople, to his friend in England giving him an account of the manner of his death.

YOUR not hearing from me, my dear Beville, has given you too many dismal apprehensions about the manner of my death; and the engagements of a generous friendship, which are not extinguished with the breath of life, oblige me to give you this satisfaction.

I made a longer stay at Constantinople than I intended; and there it pleased Heaven, that I should resign my life; which, for some months gradually

declined; but without any violent or painful disorder, or indeed the least apprehension my distemper was fatal. But my days were numbered; and when the destined hour drew near, after a sleepless night, I rose with the sun; and, as I had never been so ill as to confine myself, I sought some refreshment in one of those delicious gardens that adorn the shore of the Bosphorus.

After a short walk I found my spirits sinking; and retiring to a cypress shade, I threw myself on a flowery bank for some refreshment. A gentle slumber soon closed my eyes; which was thrice broken by what I then thought an imaginary call. The voice perfectly resembled the charming Almeria's, whose death, you know, was the occasion of my travels. I was now perfectly awake, and listening to hear the gentle summons again; but found I had neither strength to rise, nor power to call assistance. An icy coldness stopped the springs of life, and, after a little struggle, my spirit got unburdened of its clay; the curtain fell, and the invisible world appeared. The first gentle spirit that welcomed me to these new regions, was the lovely Almeria. But how dazzling! how divinely fair! Ecstacy was in her eyes, and inexpressible pleasure in every smile! her mein and aspect more soft and propitious than ever was feigned by poets of their goddess of beauty and love. What was airy fiction *there*, was *here* all transporting reality. With an inimitable grace she received me into her æthereal chariot, which was sparkling sapphire, studded with gold. It rolled with a spontaneous motion along the heavenly plains, and stopped at the Morning-star, our destined habitation. But how shall I describe this fair, this fragrant, this inchanting land of love! the delectable vales and flowery lawns; the myrtle shades and holy bowers; the bright cascades and crystal rivulets rolling over orient pearls and sands of gold, which here spread their silent waves into broad transparent lakes, smooth as the face of heaven, and there break with rapid force

[illegible] rocks of diamond and purple ame-[illegible] of immortal verdure creep up the [illegible], and adorn the prospect, with unspeak-[illegible]

[illegible] my Beville! could I lead you thro' the luxu-[illegible] bowers and soft recesses where pleasure keeps [illegible] festivals, and revels with guiltless and un-molested freedom! Whatever can raise desire, what-ever can give delight, whatever can satisfy the soul, in all the boundless capacities of joy, is found here! Every wish is replenished with full draughts of vital pleasure, such as elevate angelic minds, and gratify the noblest faculties of immortal spirits. Oh, Be-ville! my Almeria is as much superior to her former self here, as I thought her superior to the rest of her sex upon earth.

Altamont.

LETTER III.

To the Countess of ——, from her only son, who died when he was two years old.

YOUR grief is an allay to my happiness. The only sentiment my infant-state was conscious of, was a fondness for you; which was then pure instinct, and natural sympathy, but is now grati-tude and filial affection. As soon as my spirit was released from its uneasy confinement, I found myself an active and reasonable being; I was transported at the advantage and superior manner of my existence. The first reflection I made, was on my lovely bene-factor; for I knew you in that relation in my infant-state. But I was surprised to see you weeping over the little breathless form from which I thought my-self so happily delivered, as if you had lamented my escape. The fair proportion, the agility, the splen-dor of the new vehicle that my spirit now informed, was so blessed an exchange, that I wondered at your

grief; for I was so little acquainted with the difference of material and immaterial bodies, that I thought myself as visible to your sight as you were to mine. I was exceedingly moved at your [illegible] was ignorant why; unless because [illegible] most beautiful face next to my guardian [illegible] ever seen, and that you resembled some of those forms that used to recreate my guiltless [illegible] and smile on me in gentle dreams. I was then ignorant of your maternal relation to me; but remembered that you had been my refuge in all the little distresses of which I had but a faint notion. I left you unwillingly in the height of your calamity, to follow my radiant guide to a place of tranquility and joy; where I met thousands of happy spirits of my own order, who informed me of the history of my native world; for whose inhabitants I have a peculiar benevolence, and cannot help interesting myself in their welfare. But as I never discerned between good and evil, nor experienced the motives that governed the race of men, I am, I confess, astonished at their conduct, and find their joys and sorrows to be all strange and unaccountable. I have made visits to the lower world since my decease. The first that I made, was from a tender curiosity to know if you was satisfied with the disposal of heaven in my early fate; but I was surprised to find, after several months were past, your grief oppressed every thought, and clouded all the joys of your life, which made me very inquisitive into my own history. I asked the celestial who was your attendant, why I was so much lamented, and of what consequence my life would have been to the public, or my own family, since those fair eyes were yet drowned in tears for one that had made such a short and insignificant appearance below? As for the public, the gentle minister told me there was a hazard I might have proved a blessing or curse; but that I was the only hope of an illustrious family, and heir to a vast estate and distinguished titles; and pointing

to a coat of arms, told me, *that* was the badge of my dignity; the noble seat we had in view, with the gardens, fields, the woods, and parks that surrounded it, were all my entailed possession. A goodly possession! I replied, and proper for the four-footed animals that I behold feeding on the verdant pasture! But of what use these fields and woods had been to one that had an immortal spirit, I cannot conceive. And as for a title, what happiness could an airy syllable, an empty sound, bring with it? The coat of arms I took for such a toy, that if burlesque had not been beneath the dignity of an angel, I should have thought the mentioning it a ridicule on mortal men. I cannot conceive wherein the charm, the gratification of these things consist. If I were possessed of the whole earthly globe, what use could I make of this gross element, the dregs of the creation? I have no dependence on water, or fire, or earth, or air. It is unintelligible to me, that hills and vallies, trees and rivers, the mines and caverns under their feet, any more than the clouds that fly over their heads, should be the wealth of reasonable creatures. They may keep their possessions unenvied by me; I am glad I did not live long enough to make so wrong a judgment, nor to acquire a relish for such low enjoyments. I am so little concerned for the loss of such an inheritance, that if the black prince of the airy regions claimed my share, I would not dispute his title, tho' he is my aversion, and your foe.

So superior, Madam, are my present circumstances to those of the greatest monarch under the sun, that all earthly grandeur is pageantry and farce compared to the real, the innate dignity which I now possess. I am advanced to celestial glory, and triumph in the heights of immortal life and pleasure, whence pity falls on the kings of the earth.

If you could conceive my happiness, instead of the mournful solemnity with which you interred me, you would have celebrated my funeral rites with

songs and festivals. Instead of the thoughtless thing you lately smiled on and caressed, I am now in the perfection of my being, in the elevation of reason; instead of a little extent of land, and the property of so much space to breathe in, I tread the starry pavement, make the circuit of the skies, and breathe the air of paradise. I am secure of eternal duration, and independent but on the Almighty, whom I love and adore, as the fountain of my being and blessedness.

Pardon me, Madam, it is you now seem the infant, and I repay you that superior regard and tenderness which you lately bestowed on me.

Narcissus.

LETTER IV.

To my Lord ——— *from a young lady who was in a convent at Florence.*

MY Lord, finding materials in your closet, I took the opportunity of your absence to give you this intelligence of my death. The hand will convince you that it comes from your once loved Athelinda.

I lived but a few weeks after you left Italy, such was the excess of my grief; though a strict modesty still forced me to conceal my unhappy passion from the most intimate companion I had. After I had discovered it to you, I durst confess the guilty secret to none, but the compassionate and forgiving powers above: who assisted my weakness and confirmed my resolution never to comply with any of those schemes you proposed to free me from my confinement.

You had indeed convinced me, that the vows I had made were rash and uncommanded! But, oh! it was past; saints and angels heard it; the all see-

ing ſkies were invoked to witneſs the chaſte engagement; it was ſealed above, and entered in the records of heaven. Thus hopeleſs was my paſſion! perjury and ſacrilege ſtood in all their horrors before me, ruin and eternal perdition betwixt us. And yet that I loved you, my Lord, I had too often ſubſcribed to that ſoft confeſſion to leave you any doubt of it. Nor was the tender frailty without excuſe, if all the merit man could boaſt, if every grace that nature could give, or gentle art improve, deſerved diſtinction. It had been a crime to have been inſenſible in any circumſtance but mine.—Strange circumſtance! that could make it virtue to look coldly on you.

There was the emphaſis of my miſery: mine was a heart devoted to ſuperior ardors, and ſacred to Heaven alone; that Heaven which is my impartial judge and witneſs how ſincerely I ſtrove to blot you from my ſoul. But neither reaſon, nor the niceſt ſenſe of honour, nor even devotion, could aſſiſt me; ſtill you returned on my imagination triumphant in all your charms. Hopeleſs of the conqueſt, I gave myſelf up to grief and deſpair, reſolving never to attempt my eſcape from the holy retreat to which my vows had confined me, but rather to fall a victim to the ſacred names of chaſtity and truth. Heaven accepted the ſacrifice; and death, my kind deliverer, at once releaſed me from miſery and mortality; the cryſtal gates opened a ſpecious entrance, and the bleſſed immortals received me into the manſions of life and bliſs.

Whatever was feigned of Elyſian fields, and Cyprian groves, is here without deluſion ſurpaſſed. Theſe are the imperial ſeats, the native dominions of love. Here his holy torch flames out with propitious ſplendor, and his golden ſhafts are dipped in immortal joys. Here are no vows that tear us from our wiſhes, no conflict betwixt paſſion and virtue: what we like we admire; what we admire we enjoy; nor is it more our happineſs than commendation ſo to do.

That unhappy paſſion which was my torment and crime, is now my glory and my boaſt: nothing ſelfiſh or irregular, nothing that needs reſtraint or diſguiſe, mingles with the noble ardor: it is all calm and beneficent, becoming the dignity of reaſon, and the grandeur of an immortal mind, and is as laſting as its eſſence. When the lamps of heaven are quenched, when the ſun has burnt out its ſplendor, this divine principle ſhall ſhine with undiminiſhed luſtre, the joy and triumph of the heavenly nations. The ſubſtance of love, my Lord, dwells in heaven, its ſhadow only is to be found upon earth.

Ethelinda.

LETTER V.

To _____

YOU remember, as we were on a clear ſummer-evening gazing on the beauty of the ſtars, I promiſed, if you ſurvived me, to give you an account of the planetary worlds, and their inhabitants. I have not made half the tour of the ſkies; but will, if I can, deſcribe to you the laſt of theſe novelties in which I entertained myſelf. It was in a region immenſe ſpaces diſtant from that ſyſtem which is enlightened by your ſun, and created numberleſs ages before the foundations of the earth were laid, and the meaſure thereof deſcribed, before the day-ſpring knew its place, and the bounds of darkneſs were determined; before man was formed of the ground, and the Almighty breathed into him a living ſoul: an unmeaſurable duration before this, the unlimited Creator had made and peopled millions of glorious worlds. The inhabitants of this which I am deſcribing, ſtood their probation, and are confirmed in their original rectitude; but will never be admitted into the empyrean heaven, being

incapable of that ſupreme degree of happineſs which angels and the ſpirits of juſt men attain. However, they are exempt from all evil, bleſſed to the height of their faculties and conceptions, and are privileged with immortality. Their reſidence may properly be called *the enchanted world*. Whatever you have heard fabled of fairy ſcenes, of vocal groves, and palaces riſing to magic ſounds, is all real here, and performed by the eaſy and natural operations of theſe active ſpirits. I have in an inſtant ſeen palaces aſcend to a majeſtic height, ſparkling as the ſtars, and tranſparent as the unclouded æther. I might deſcribe them like the courtly prophet: *Their walls were fair colours, their foundation ſapphire, the windows of agate and the gates of carbuncle.* Their materials here are all glittering and refined; not, like the earthly globe, dark and heavy. Theſe æthereals are the niceſt judges of ſymmetry and proportion; and, by the diſpoſition of light and ſhade, and the mixture of a thouſand dazzling colours, form the moſt charming proſpects. They have ſuch a command and knowledge of the powers of nature, that in an inſtant they raiſe a variety of ſylvan ſcenes, and carry the perſpective through verdant avenues, and flowery walks, to an unmeaſurable length; while living fountains caſt up their ſilver ſpouts, and form glittering arches among the trees, of growth and verdure not to be expreſſed.

They are acquainted with all the utmoſt myſteries of ſound, and are poſſeſſed with the very ſoul of harmony. Art is theirs in all its changing notes, its blandiſhments, and graces. Whatever nature can boaſt in her wild licentious charms, is governed by them. The winding vales, the ſtreams and groves breathe muſic at their command; the nightingale, and dying ſwan, ſeem to complain to gentle zephyrs whiſpering through the trees; while a thouſand airy ſongſters warble to the meaſured fall of high cadences, which, by intervals ſinking into a deep ſilence, after a graceful pauſe, ſhrill recorders and ſilver

trumpets sound; while harmless thunders roll above, and break with a glorious solemnity: till the blissful tempest rises, and swells the mind to sacred grandeur and seraphic elevation; till subdued and melted into softness by the melody of tuneful reeds, warbling lutes, and sweet enchanting voices of the Lydian strains.

The language of this charming region is perfectly musical and elegant, and becoming the fair inhabitants, who are fresh and rosy as the opening morning, clear as the meridian light, and fragrant as the breath of Jessamine, or new-blown roses. How exquisitely proportioned their shapes! their aspect how transporting! how gentle, how charming, beyond all the race of mortal men! Never did the eye-lids of the morning open on such perfection; never did the sun, since first it journeyed through the skies, behold such beauty; nor can human fancy, in its most inspired flights, conceive such amiable wonders.

Perhaps in all my planetary rambles, I shall not be able to give you an account of any objects more surprising: but while I am permitted, I shall continue my intelligence to the most agreeable friend I had on earth. And be assured, when you are released from mortality, you will meet in spite of distance of time and place, (those mortal foes to love upon earth,)

Your constant and unchanged

Junius.

LETTER VI.

To _____

MY dear Miss, though the engagements of nature are cancelled, the superior obligations of virtue remain in their full force. You have been

faithful to my memory, and the strictest rules of piety; though it has proved of fatal consequence to the unhappy man who was lately my husband, and by that relation a brother to you. With inward grief and compassion I saw the guilty inclination, but never uttered the least complaint, nor gave him one uneasy moment. I knew your mind as faultless as your form; and saw you governed in all your conduct by conscious honour, and unblemished virtue. Envy itself could not have reproached you with the least deviation from modesty and truth: nor was the promise I would have extorted from the guilty youth on my death-bed, the effect of jealousy; but a kind design to reclaim him, and free you from his importunity, if I could have engaged him, as I desired, not to converse with you after my decease. But he was sincere enough to refuse me; and as soon as a slight formality would suffer him, he pursued his incestuous passion. Your obstinate repulses have at last the tragical effect I expected. From the moment that he heard the day of your marriage with the illustrious Montandre was set, he resolved on the unnatural fact; and never was self-murder performed in a more calm and deliberate manner. He spent part of the evening with two of his friends, men of wit and learning: his discourse with them was all intended to prove the right a man has to dispose of his life, and put an end to his being, when it was rather his burden than happiness. He returned to his house in a more early hour than usual; and retiring to his chamber, called for a young and only daughter that I had left him. Taking her in his arms, while the lovely infant smiled on him, tears dropped from his eyes: when he would have blessed it, the unbelieving prayer faultered on his tongue; and delivering the child to its nurse, he ordered his servants to deny him to all company. As soon as he was alone, he wrote that moving letter which you received. When he had finished and sealed it, he took a Lucretius from the table, and

read and paused by intervals. At last, looking on his watch, just at *two*, he fastened his chamber-door, and drew his sword, repeating the following lines; which I wish had never been writ, as, I assure you, does the author of them too,

——" Here's a quick relief
" To all thy vain imaginary grief!
" For thou shalt sleep, and never wake again,
" And quitting life, shalt quit thy living pain.
" The worst that can befal thee, measur'd right,
" Is a sound slumber and a long good night."

Then directing the point exactly to his heart, he fell on his sword, and immediately expired; and left a tender orphan friendless and exposed. This is the motive of my writing to you, that you would take the charge of her education, and protect her infant-innocence. Be sure to perform this generous office, as you would prosper, and be yourself protected in any of the calamities of human life. By desiring you to make all possible provision for her happiness, I present you with an opportunity of promoting your own.

Amanda.

LETTER VII.

To——————

MY dear Emilia, it will be impossible for me to give you the intelligence I promised from the invisible regions, unless I could translate the language of paradise into that of mortals: for here are a thousand beauties unrevealed, and a thousand delights unnamed among the race of men. We drink at the fountain-head of happiness, and bathe in the rivers of immortal pleasure; the sprightly hours

dance along, crowned with love, and unutterable ecstasy.

You were witness to my dying agony; I saw your last kind tears, and gave up my breath in your arms. But how changed was the scene in a moment! from the gloom and horror of a death-bed, to the smiles and songs of angels, who conducted me to the etherial heights! A thousand dazzling wonders met my view; the heavens in pomp unfolded their glories, the paradise of God opened before me in all its blissful and transporting scenes! The happy groves stood crowned with unfading verdure; the lucid currents danced along over sands of gold; the charming bowers displayed their ever blooming pride, and breathed ambrosia; the palaces of the heavenly powers ascended with exquisite magnificence, sparkling far beyond all the glories of the lower skies, and resounded with the voice of festivity and joy.

The first gentle spirit that welcomed me to these happy mansions was your charming brother, gay as a cherubim. The heavenly loves and graces triumphed in all his form; vital pleasure danced in his eyes; life and celestial bloom sat smiling on his face; a wreath of unfading flowers circled his head; and a golden lute was in his hand, whose harmony, joined to his melting voice, far surpassed all description. That tender innocent passion I had long conceived for him, kindled at the first interview, and has taken eternal possession of my soul.

But how shall I make you sensible of what an angel's flowing song, in all the pomp of heavenly harmony, would not fully describe! In what figures of celestial eloquence shall I relate the loves of immortal spirits; or tell you the height, the extent, the fulness of their bliss! All the soft engagements on the earth, the tender sympathies, and the most holy union that nature knows, are but faint similitudes for the sanctity and grandeur of these divine enjoyments. Hope, and languishing expectation, are no more, and all desire is lost in full and complete fruition. Love

reigns in eternal triumph; here it governs every heart, and dwells on every tongue.

They tune their golden harps to the great name
Of Love, immortal Love, their darling theme.
Ten thousand echoes thro' the lightsome plains
Repeat the clear, the sweet melodious strains.
The fields rejoice, the fragrant groves around
Blossom afresh at their inchanting sound.
The host'n of heav'n from dazzling heights above
Returns the same, and hails the power of Love.

But oh! when the fair face of eternal Love unveils its original glories, and appears in the perfection of uncreated beauty, how wondrous, how ineffable the vision! fulness of joy is in his presence, rapture and inexpressible ecstacy; the fairest seraph stops his lute, and with a graceful pause confesses the subject too great for his most exalted strain. How impetuously do the streams of immortal joy roll in, and enlarge the faculties of every heavenly mind!

Ye sacred mysteries, unrevealed to men; ye glories, unprofaned by mortal eyes, forgive the bold attempt that would describe you.—The only description that mortals can receive of you is, that you are not to be described.

Delia.

LETTER VIII.

To ——— and ———

WHEN you had just made me happy, and rewarded the most tender passion in the world with the possession of your charms, I was compelled to make a voyage to Spain. You saw the inward struggle of my soul, and that I must suffer the anguish of death in leaving you, when you fur-

prised me with the unexpected generous offer, to follow me through all the dangers of the sea. Charmed with the proposal, I took you at your word, and rashly ventured my darling treasure to the hazards of a voyage; I left my life in your defence against an Algerine corsair. The trade was just, and met with the approbation in the seats of peace and happiness. For my own lot, I could not wish it more advantageous; and for yours, such virtue in distress will be the peculiar care of Heaven. The barbarian that made you his prize, treated you with an unaccustomed gentleness; not has the illustrious Bassa, that ransomed you out of his power at an immense price, given you the least occasion of reproach. In the height of his passion he has always observed even the sanctity of the Christian rules, and treated you with a submission very different from the principles and customs of his country. Though he has courted you to increase the number of his wives, he seems to have such an absolute command of himself, even in the warmth of his youthful desires, that you need fear no violence from the generous infidel. But should the worst you imagine arrive, Heaven has a thousand ways to protect your innocence. Depend on that; and let not the extravagance of your grief persuade you that it is lawful to free yourself by the fatal opiate which you keep for that design. The heavenly genii that attend you, have made a thousand impressions on your sleeping fancy, to warn you from the desperate attempt. Sometimes you have been led through the desolate shades where unhappy ghosts complain; the gloomy caverns, the abodes of eternal horror, have been opened to your view; sometimes the rewards of patience and constant virtue have displayed their glories to your pleased imagination; and, by the soft inspiring whispers of celestial beings, your ruffled thoughts have been composed, while the realms of joy have unfolded their delights in visionary prospects to you. By heavenly

scenes, and gentle slumbers, your griefs were calmed, the tempest of your passions suspended. Then quietly attend the event, and the gentle Calicura will find a way to free you. Till Abubecar saw you, she was his darling slave; and as he is handsome to admiration, she loved and renounced the Christian faith for him: but still the fair apostate in her heart adores the name which her tongue has denied. This, though you are her rival, fills her soul with the softest compassion for you, and makes her abhor the task that her insolent master has imposed, of persuading you to quit the possession of the heavenly truth, which is your happiness and glory. She is so far from giving you that infernal counsel, that she has with tears and intreaties persuaded you to die, rather than abandon your glorious hopes and title to immortality: nor will she rest till she has by some means or other secured you from Abubecar's importunity; of complying with which she has experienced the delusive and bitter consequence.

Your coldness and aversion, with the ascendant her wit and vivacity has on his temper, will soon recover the youthful wanderer, and restore her to an absolute empire over him; and then you are secure of a guiltless protection, till you can give your friends in England intelligence of your circumstances, who will soon pay your ransom; which no one can for virtue lust.

In the mean time, if you love my memory, moderate the excess of your grief for my death; which, however tragical it appeared, was glorious and happy for me. I fell in the ardour of a brave action, in the defence of your beauty and liberty, and my own life. The wounds I received, gave a free passage to my soul; which took its flight with no other regret but that of parting with you, if it may be called a separation; for I have been your constant attendant in my invisible state; your unseen companion in the beautiful walks and bowers where you

so frequently spend your hours of retirement. I should with pleasure hear you repeat my name, as I often do, and in the softest language express the constancy of a virtuous passion, could you refrain those floods of tears, and be more resigned to the will of Heaven. But let this assure you, that I am in the height of happiness, and when your life is finished, we shall meet to part no more: which circumstance though you, through your partiality for me, may too highly value, believe me, you will find it by much the smallest blessing of this place.

Amintor.

LETTER IX.

To Sylvia.

FROM the fragrant bowers, the ever-blooming fields, and lightsome regions of the Morning Star, I wish health and every blessing to the charming Sylvia, the blessing of the earth!

I have a secret to reveal to you, of the greatest importance to your present and future happiness. You are as much a stranger to your own rank and circumstances as I was to mine till I came here; where I met a fair spirit, who informed me, that when she was a mortal I was her son, and not the heir of the Earl of ——, as was supposed, and that the Lord —— is your own brother. It is necessary that you should know, and discover this to him, which will prevent that innocent fondness which he now indulges for you, from growing into a guilty passion.

You have been educated only as a dependent on the noble family you are in, and as a companion to the young ladies who are really your sisters. The mystery is this. My Lord, your father, had several daughters successively by the Countess your mother,

but no lawful heir; which made him fond of a natural son that he had by a mistress. His affection for him was so extravagant, that he contrived to settle his estate on him. This gave your mother such anxiety, that her jealousy and aversion to the youth got her on this vile design, when she was with child, to exchange it if it proved a daughter. My mother, who was married out of her service, and in whom she could entirely confide, was with child of me at the same time. Their time of delivery was very near together. My mother had a son, and you proved a daughter. The affair was managed with such dexterity, that I was exchanged and passed without suspicion for the Countess's son; and you was received by my mother, and supposed to be her daughter. Within a year the Countess had really a son; but she dying as soon as she was delivered, the secret was undiscovered.

I lived a guiltless impostor till I was ten years old; when a sudden decay withered my tender bloom. But, as I had been bred in the strictest notions of piety and truth, without any childish prejudices, or slavish fears, I expected my approaching end, while Death made his advances armed with a golden-headed dart. I had no notions of misery; all my expectations were bright, though imperfect, of some paradise beyond the grave; and closing my eyes, I fell asleep, and waked to immortal life and happiness. All that was past, looked like a dream, like an airy image, of I know not what: Some notion I had of a God, and my dependence on him; but how different from the illumination that broke in on my soul the moment it threw off its mortal vail! It was then I began to live and reflect; it was then I found myself a rational being, and looked back with contempt on the insignificant part I had been acting. The memory of my original fellow, the childish baubles and toys that had just before been my diversion, would have given me some confusion, if my case had been singular: but I met thousands

of gay spirits newly released, who had performed their short task, and finished their trifling races of life; at the same time, transported at their present superior circumstances, they made the most agreeable reflections on their past state. What grandeur, what vivacity, what enlargement of their intellectual powers! how sparkling, how resembling the angels of God, their forms! while a perfect consciousness, and exact remembrance of what they were but a few moments past, raised their joy and gratitude to the height, and recommended heaven itself.

There was one circumstance in my early death that makes me look on it as a peculiar favour, in that I was removed by the just dispensation of Heaven, from the possession of what is, in the strictest equity, your brother's right. This reflection, from a principle of justice and truth, gave me an ineffable satisfaction; since, if I had lived, I had been the unhappy, though innocent, usurper of a rank and inheritance to which I had not the least real title. This, with a thousand other advantages, makes me bless the period that freed me from mortality; that happy moment that delivered me from ignorance and vanity; from the errors, the guilt, the miseries of human life; of which, though I had but little experience, I am now fully informed of the state of my fellow-creatures, and with what toil and hazard a longer course of years had been attended.

I remember no engagement to the world, but my affection for you; nor has death effaced the tender impression. But what has been a natural sympathy is now a rational esteem. I view with pleasure your growing virtue, and frequent my native world for your sake. There was something perfectly engaging in the guileless sorrow you expressed in my sickness; and when my eyes were closed in death, you would have watched the breathless clay, in hopes to wake me from the fatal slumber again; nor could the gloomy solemnity of a room of state de-

ter you from paying your vows to the fleet reliques. If any thing could have tempted me to wish myself a mortal again, it would have been the tender tears you shed for me. The only intervals of human life I review with pleasure, are the hours I spent with you. This gentle passion was the stamp of heaven on my soul, the first soft impression it received; and it gains new energy in these happy regions of pure beneficence and love. This gives me a constant solicitude, while I see you on the borders of such a temptation. You are yet perfectly guiltless, and have done nothing unbecoming the sanctity of nature, and the chaste affection of a sister for a brother. But you are on the very limits of danger; a step further, the least advance, involves you in sin and destruction. I know this discovery will give you a secret horror, and quench every kindling desire. The purity of your virtue will start at the enchanting error, that might have led you on to certain perdition; for young as you are, the contagious spark is ready to kindle, and the lovely boy appears more alluring. Your mutual conversation, and the early dawning of superior merit in both, endeared you to each other, by such sentiments as only noble and virtuous minds experience. But as a more late discovery might have been fatal to your innocence and peace, I impatiently attended an opportunity and method to make you sensible of your danger. I know though I have been dead four years, you still remember me; and I have often heard you name me, and seen you with delight gazing on my picture. This made me resolve to appear to you, when I saw you. The first opportunity that pleased me, you were sitting, gazing at your own reflection; and sticking flowers in your hair, to adorn it for your young lover. I knew you had read of fairies, and looked at painted cupids with delight. In such a poetical form I thought you would have heard my story, and been pleased with my figure;

"While youthful splendor lighten'd in my eyes,
"Clear as the smiling glory of the skies;
"Sprinkled with radiant gold, a purple hue
"My wings display'd, my robes celestial blue;
"More white than flax my curling tresses flow'd,
"My dimpled cheeks with rosy beauty glow'd."

I could not have believed a form more gay than those that glittered on your fan could have discomposed you; but, to my surprize, I saw you faint away, before I had begun to speak to you. You soon recovered from the swoon; and returning to the house told a story, which you found no-body believed: so wise is the age in which you live, as not to be imposed on! You easily perswaded yourself it was no more than a dream. However, I durst attempt your courage no more, but give you this important information this way; which if you should not credit, you are undone. In this admonition your guardian angel joins with

Alexis.

LETTER X.

To Leonora.

YOUR story of seeing an apparition in the garden, I perceive, has frighted your whole family; and not a mortal durst enter into the haunted walk, as they call it, after the sun sets, but your brother, to whom I have not the least intention to shew myself. It was only to you, my charming Leonora, the visit was designed. I flattered myself, your good sense, and uncommon presence of mind, would have guarded you from those unreasonable fears.

As I expected, the fine evening induced you to take your accustomed walk. The sun was hardly set, when you entered a long avenue of trees, that led to a green flowery arch, which looked as a sylvan palace. Here I seated myself in a humain, and,

as I thought, a very agreeable figure and dress; and as much as poſſible diſguiſing the ſplendor of immortality, I imitated my mortal form; and ſo placed myſelf, that by ſeeing me at a diſtance, you might come nearer without ſurpriſe, or retire, if your courage failed. As ſoon as you perceived me, you ſtopped in ſome conſternation; and ſeemed in ſuſpenſe, whether you ſhould go nearer or make your retreat. I durſt not riſe, nor make the leaſt offer to follow, for fear you ſhould take your flight with too much ſpeed and diſorder; and as you found I was a very civil apparition, and would not intrude on your retirement, you went off with a ſober and decent pace, often looking back to convince yourſelf that what you ſaw was real. As ſoon as you had reached the houſe, I ſhifted my material figure for one more becoming the dignity of the celeſtial condition; and being again inviſible, I heard the fantaſtic relation you gave your brother; who told you it was all the effect of the ſpleen and obſtinate grief you had indulged ſince my death. You ſtill aſſerted the reality of what you told him; but he believed it no more than if he had heard it from the pulpit.

You might have diſmiſſed every thought of fear. I would not have injured you when I was a mortal, liable to folly and error; much leſs in a ſtate of perfection and happineſs. There is not a ſpark of guilt or malignity left in virtuous minds, when releaſed from their earthly priſon; all is gentle and kind; and their concern for human welfare is infinitely more tender and diſintereſted than before.

The terror with which men fly us, would have ſomething in it incredible, if we did not remember our own original folly and ignorance; but as we do, your ſtrange apprehenſions only divert and entertain us. If you thought juſtly, you would have more reaſon to run full ſpeed from one another, than from us, who have neither power nor inclination to injure; but are ready to ſerve you in a thouſand

dangers, and to promote your intereſt with the moſt generous concern, while you are entirely ignorant of your benefactors. Were human organs more refined, and your perceptions heightened to a greater delicacy, you would ſee a thouſand ethereal forms in the full bloom of immortal beauty and undecaying life; not faſhioned to give you terror, but love and delight.

You ſee, my dear Leonora, I would fain cure your prejudices, and reconcile you to the ſociety of ſpirits; that you may ſometimes permit me to warn your unguarded years, when dangers and ſnares attend you.

You know your father left me the guardian of your fortune and beauty, ſo favourable was his opinion of me. This circumſtance made me miſerable, and at once cut off all my future views of happineſs. I had indulged a ſecret paſſion for you, and flattered myſelf you had the ſame for me; but as my birth and fortune were much inferior to yours, I was reſolved rather to die than uſe the advantage that was in my power, or violate the ſacred truſt I had undertaken. By a thouſand little ſoft inadvertencies you diſcovered your paſſion; but, tho' ſecure of ſucceſs, I durſt not ſeduce you into a compliance of marriage ſo vaſtly below your high rank and character, nor take the advantage of betraying your thoughtleſs years to an action unbecoming your quality and fortune. My ſoul was unſtained with any deſign that was mean and ſelfiſh; and the entire confidence your father had in my integrity and conduct, fixed my reſolution of acting up to the ſevereſt rules of virtue and truth. But to what diſtreſs was I reduced! I loved you to madneſs, while I never approached you but with a diſſembled indifference. This reſtraint, and the conſtant agitation of my thoughts, diſordered my health; and threw me into a violent fever, which ſoon finiſhed my life. The juſtice and fidelity of my conduct found its immenſe reward; and left me nothing to repent of, but the giving my truſt entirely

to your brother's care, whose licentious manners will expose you to a thousand dangers. To repair this negligence, I would fain have induced you to a conversation, that might have directed your conduct, and fortified your virtue by my friendly admonition. But since your fears put it out of my power ever to be visible to you again, I must take this way to convince you how unchangeable my concern for your happiness is. Oh let it not be dearer to me than it is to yourself!

Clerimont.

LETTER XI.

To the same.

I Leave your fellow-mortals to congratulate your recovery; but I must own it was a disappointment to me. You were on the confines of immortality. The angels who are ministring spirits to the heirs of salvation, had prepared their song of triumph to receive you; I had wreathed a garland of the fairest flowers that bloomed in the paradise of God, to crown such early and distinguished virtue: with impatience I numbered your moments, and expected every one would be your last: the sparkling vivacity of your eyes expired, the roses on your cheeks vanished into a mortal paleness, and the springs of life seemed just ready to cease their motion; when he who governs nature with a supreme command, restored you back to health. Your recovery was surprising even to angels; who, though ignorant of the various limits the Sovereign Disposer has set to human life, yet often make exact conjectures of the course of second causes, and the period of mortal lives. You are certainly given back as a blessing to the world: your example may yet make a thousand proselytes to virtue. But for my

part, nothing but the will of Heaven could reconcile me to this dispensation; when you was just in the harbour, to be tossed back again on the tempestuous ocean; when you had welcomed death, as your kind deliverer, ready to free you from Cassander's importunity, and your brother's tyranny, who will do his utmost to compel you to this detestable marriage. But your constancy to refuse it is of the highest importance to your present and future happiness. He is already married, under a borrowed name, to a young and beautiful Italian, whom he stole from her parents; and after he had lived two months concealed with her, the perjured man left and abandoned her to misery. In the height of her anguish she put herself into a nunnery, where she wastes her days in a reluctant and unprofitable devotion: for true religion cannot exist but by our choice; necessity can give nothing but the appearance of it.

This is a secret, of which you would never have been informed by any human means. If you discover it to your brother, it will deliver you from the violence which he is determined to use, to force you to wed Cassander, another name for *misery*.

It is a disinterested concern for you, that makes me give you this advice. There is no jealousy in heavenly minds. They know their pre eminence; and should they appear in their celestial splendor, the most perfect beauty of the children of men would wither in their presence. But vanity and emulation are no more, and all selfish designs are unknown in these happy continents.

You may, by making a proper use of this notice, provide for your own happiness; but, blessed be the great Author of all good! you cannot add to mine.

Clarimont.

LETTER XII.

To my dear Brother.

YOUR friend, the unhappy Carlos, died this night at Naples. I was willing to ſurpriſe you with this intelligence, in a way which no human ſpeed can reach.

I wiſh my endeavours for your reformation may have more ſucceſs now, than they had when I was in a ſtate of mortality. I am perſuaded, if you had ſeen the exit of the wretched youth, who had been the companion of your riots, it would have convinced you of the falſehood of his principles; and how little ſupport the thoughts of falling back into his original nothing gave him, when the gloomy hour approached, in which he was to loſe the ſight of the ſun and ſtars, with all the viſible beauties of nature for ever.

To be inſenſible! to be no more! to find his eyes cloſing in an eternal ſleep! gave him inexpreſſible horrors. But if this was the worſt that he apprehended, never did mortal give up his life in a manner more cowardly and inconſiſtent. He durſt not bear darkneſs or ſolitude one moment: he ſtarted at a ſhadow, and ſhewed a more than childiſh fear and weakneſs in his actions! he even begged his phyſicians to flatter him with the hopes of life, and not let him know if they thought his caſe deſperate: he charged his attendant not to mention death or the grave, nor to ſpeak a ſerious word in his hearing. Though his affairs were in the utmoſt diſorder, no perſon durſt venture to adviſe him to ſettle them by a will. But all theſe cautions gave him no relief; the anguiſh, the guilt, the confuſion of his mind, was viſible in his looks. The abandoned Amoret, who had followed him in the diſguiſe of a page, was ſeldom permitted to ſee him; and whenever ſhe

approached him, he trembled and fell into the greatest agonies, closed his eyes, or turned them from her: but spoke nothing to support her in the distress he had brought on her; nor expressed the least remorse for having seduced her to leave the noble Sebastian, to whom she was engaged by marriage vows, and a thousand tender obligations. His peevishness and impatience were unsufferable, and even despicable to own his servants. When the medicines he took had not their expected success, he reproached his physicians with negligence, or want of skill; and yet by intervals implored their assistance, as if his being itself depended on their art. His senses were perfect to the last gasp. With amazement he saw the universal terror make its slow and dreadful approaches; and, after a tedious and painful struggle, yielded to the gloomy conqueror, and with a deep groan gave up his breath, and went to make the great experiment.

I hope this account of your friend's death, will have the happy effect I designed it, and make you recollect the counsel I gave you with my dying breath;——the best legacy I could bequeath, if I had had empires to dispose of.

My dear brother, I can have no selfish motives now, in endeavouring to reclaim your extravagancies. In this superior state, my concern for your happiness must be all abstract and generous. The acknowledgments of indigent miserable mortals, signify nothing to spirits exalted to celestial dignities, in the full enjoyment of immortal pleasures: but this gives them the most kind and beneficent dispositions to erring men, whom they would fain allure into the paths that lead to happiness. Those glimmering sparks of goodness and amity, which, in your cold regions, are but just dawning in virtuous minds, in these warmer climates acquire new ardour, and burn with eternal splendor.

I have more zeal than ever for your interest: and let me recal, but not reproach you with the obliga-

tions you have to pay some regard to my advice. You know, when we lost the best of parents, that he left his whole estate to my disposal, with such a moderate fortune to your share, as must have restrained your wild expences: but when I found you had some sense of your folly, in hopes to reform you by generous treatment, I immediately settled on you half the vast fortune that was in my power. I will not urge my venturing my life in your defence, when assaulted in our travels; for this was but an action of humanity, which every brave man owes to a perfect stranger. But I must insist on the merit of resigning my pretensions to the lovely Bellamira for you. She was all the joy, the hope, I had on earth: I loved her as I loved virtue and happiness: and yet, when you discovered to me the anguish and disorder of your mind, and your violent passion for her, I made a retreat, and left the weeping beauty to reproach me with a levity and indifference to which my heart was a stranger; disguised my tender inclination, and pleaded yours with such success, that she yielded to your request, and gave her matchless charms and immense fortune to your possession.

But this advantageous match had not the effect I hoped, nor was the least restraint to your licentious manner of life. You acted a shameful part in assisting Carlos in his affair with Amoret, and a more shameful one in promising to protect and support her if he abandoned her, when you knew whatever repeated favours you had received from the injured and generous Sebastian. Your ingrateful and treacherous treatment of a man of his exalted merit, fills me with the greatest remorse and confusion. A thousand and a thousand times have I reproached myself for having been the unhappy instrument of Bellamira's ruin; who pined beneath her grief, like a fair flower blasted in its prime. I never met her eyes, but she might have seen the remorse and confusion of my soul. The negligence and contempt with which you treated the best of women, sunk

my youthful spirits, damped my noblest designs, and clouded the gayest season of my life. While death made its slow and silent approaches, the last favour I begged of you was to be just to your unhappy wife, in breaking all engagements with the lewd and infamous Amoret. This you promised me with a religious solemnity. But I know her present distress (though the just effect and reward of her crimes) will be your snare. She is all enchantment, and will, I fear, be your ruin. But, if you reject my advice, take this caution from the royal penitent, *Her house is the way to death, and her gates lead down to hell.* And I desire you to consider seriously, that this admonition must *rescue* you from, or *double* your guilt.

Cleanders.

LETTER XIII.

To ——

HOWEVER different my present manner of existence is from my former state, my affection to the fair Climene is unchanged. As I live and act in a way inexpressibly superior to mortal life, so the beneficent dispositions of my nature rise to a more noble and generous height. My concern for your happiness is more tender and disinterested than ever. I have guarded your nightly slumbers, waited on your solitary walks, and followed you like your attendant angels, who, pleased with my officious care, has often left you to my charge. Your present danger gives me as much anxiety as consists with a state of happiness. I could not refrain from giving you this warning, which, to your surprise, you will find on your toilet, among trifles the most its reverse.

You are, O too credulous fair! on the very brink of ruin. Treachery and delusion are in Alexander's

eyes and tongue; and if you keep this night's appointment with him, you are undone. Infamy and perdition are before you. The evil genii that envy the happiness of the human race, already insult my pious care; and your celestial guardian seems half resolved to quit his trust. The tender grief hangs on his beautiful face, like a cloud on the rosy morning, and, in the deepest silence of the night, when the creation seemed lulled in universal slumber, in the gloom of a neighbouring grove that you often frequent, I heard him tune his silver lute, to strains soft and languishing, as those in which the heavenly ministers mourned the loss of paradise, and the bold transgression of the first woman that fell. And yours, unhappy maid! will be a fall from the heights of honour, from the very triumph of virtue. What can man believe? what can the sex boast, when such innocence, such truth, such modesty as yours, are perverted? Vice will insult to find Climene among her votaries, and hardly believe her own conquest, surprised like the barbarous Gauls in the Roman senate, who thought it an assembly of gods, till they saw them bleed.

With what a profligate air, with what insolent vanity, did your young seducer leave you last night! how proud of his unexpected success, when he had gained your consent to the guilty assignation! I shall with you an unseen witness of the remorse and confusion in which he left you. How disordered! how unlike yourself did you appear! It was your usual hour of devotion! A Bible lay near, which you took in your hand, but durst not open, for fear the sanctity of its rules should reproach you. The distraction of your thoughts gave me hopes, that you would recover yourself, and break the guilty engagement you had made. To confirm your doubtful virtue, I was on the point of making myself visible; but the unaccountable fear that mortals have of the inhabitants of the immaterial worlds restrained me, lest the effect should have been fatal

to your timorous temper, however gentle and propitious my appearance and address had been. And I thought this letter might, left surprise, and more calmly persuade you.

You have yet a few hours to recollect yourself. And sure you will not give up an unblemished reputation, with all the peace and innocence of your mind, to this blind extravagant passion! Besides the injustice to the unhappy Sylvia, to whom Alcander is engaged by a thousand vows, and who now pines away in obscurity, a victim to his falsehood and perjury. Be virtuous and compassionate; be kind to her, and just to yourself.

After this warning, even from the dead, your crime will be aggravated. You must deliberately venture on perdition, and damn yourself with design and sober reflection. You must desperately give up your title to celestial happiness; to the worlds of life and pleasure, of immortal beauty and youth. Oh, how superior to that with which you are at this instant so fatally enamoured below!

LETTER XIV.

To ——

My dear sister, I have often, since I left the world, had the privilege to supply the place of your guardian angel. I have been an invisible witness of your tears for my death; and to allay the excess of your grief for me, I have been at last permitted to let you know that I am happy.

I can give you no account how my soul was released. I fell asleep in perfect health, with an unusual serenity of mind; and, from the gentlest slumbers of innocence and peace, awaked in immortal bliss. (How common is sudden death!) I found myself in a moment got above the stars, and outshining the sun in its meridian splendor. Corruption

had put on incorruption, and mortality was swallowed up of life and immortality. O death! I cried in the exaltation of my thoughts, O death! where is thy conquest? O king of terrors! where is thy boasted victory? where is thy sceptre and imperial horrors, thy gloomy state, and dreadful attendants? Where are thy vast dominions, the cheerless and formless darkness, the shade and the emptiness, the seats of corruption and decay? The spell is broken! the enchantment is dissolved! the shadows, the phantoms, the visionary terrors fly! the celestial morning dawns, and charming scenes arise. But, oh! how boundless, how various, how transporting the prospect!

Still lost in joy and wonder, Tell me, said I, ye angels, ye smiling forms that surround me, what easy passage has my spirit found from its mortal prison? what gentle hand has unlocked my earthly fetters, and brought me out of darkness and confinement into immense light and liberty? Who was the kind messenger that conveyed the welcome invitation to my ear? What melodious voice called me away from yonder cold tempestuous regions, to these soft and peaceful habitations? How have I found my passage through the trackless æther, and gained the summit of the everlasting hills? Am I awake? Do I dream? Is this a gay, a flattering vision? Oh, no! it is all blissful and transporting certainty! I see, I hear things unutterable, such as never entered into the heart of mortal man to conceive.——Read, and believe; believe, and be happy.

You see, my dear sister, how blindly you repine at the decrees of heaven, and how unreasonably you lament what you call my early and untimely fate. Could I be happy too soon? I left the world indeed in the full pride of my youthful years, in the height of greatness and reputation, surrounded with the blandishments and flatteries of pleasure. But these advantages might have been fatal snares to my virtue in a longer trial. It was indulgent in Heaven, after

a short probation, to crown me with the rewards of victory. It is past the toil, the danger; and all to come is endless peace and triumph.

If you could see so far into futurity now, and think as justly of it as you will certainly do on your death-bed, this letter from me had been superfluous. I only can *design* it beneficial; you may *make* it so.

LETTER XV.

To——

IT is past! the voyage of life is finished! Instead of informing you that I am arrived at the Indian coasts, this is to let you know that I am safely landed on the celestial shores. The vessel in which I was embarked, by a tempest, sunk to the bottom of the ocean, and the angel of the waters received my newly unembodied soul.

I was surprised at the different manner of my existence. I breathed indeed no longer; but I lived, I heard, I saw, with a more exquisite sense than before. But a few moments were past, since the raging billows carried destruction in their appearance; and now I moved unterrified thro' the deeps, and surveyed the foundation of the ancient hills. The regent of the waters, pleased with my curiosity, led me through his chrystal palaces and coral groves, shewed me the pearly grottoes and alcoves of amber, with a thousand wonders, kept secret from the race of men since the bases of the mountains were laid.

As soon as I had gone the round of the liquid regions, an ethereal messenger took me under his conduct. I followed my gentle guide through the airy spaces; and here all was novelty and surprize. I made the tour of the universe, and explored the limits of the creation with unspeakable agility. I

moved from star to star, and met ten thousand suns blazing in full glory without fear or consternation. I followed the track of prodigious comets that drew their flaming tails over half the sky. From the planetary regions I ascended, with the ease and swiftness of a thought, to the superior heavens, the imperial palace of the Most High. But here description fails, and all beyond is unutterable.

This is the only account you can possibly receive of my death, which your own fears had so truly presaged at our parting. And this, my much loved Henrietta, I hope, will put an end to all your anxiety, for since the change is proved so happy for me, you are too much my friend to be concerned thereat.

Philander.

LETTER XVI.

To my Lord [illegible]

My dear Brother,

AS immaterial beings mingle unseen in what society they please, I had the curiosity last night to know your thoughts of what had happened to you the night before; and I heard you make a very gay declamation to some of your free companions, on the power of fancy, and the strength of your own imagination. But really, my Lord, you are not so visionary and extravagant as you represented yourself. There is nothing more certain than what you saw and heard; and you might have credited your senses without so much diffidence and modesty, which you turn into a vice.

You have but a few weeks, my dear brother, to live; your hours are numbered, and your last hour is determined. I obtained a permission, seldom allowed, to give you some warning of your approach-

ing fate. I chose the opportunity, when I found you, in a clear moon-light night, sitting in a pensive posture by the side of a fountain in your garden. To gain credit to my message, I stood before you in the splendor of a heavenly form, and the bloom of immortal beauty; but so resembling my former self, that, in your surprise, you called me sister, and stepped forward to embrace me. I durst not profane myself by a mortal touch; but, eluding your arms, placed myself before you on the opposite side of the canal. I stood silent some time that you might be recollected; and then setting a golden lute, which I had in my hand, to one of the melodious strains which angels sing to expiring saints, when they would soften the agonies of death, and make its terrors smile; in those languishing and melting notes I gave you an invitation to the starry mansions, believing this would have a much better effect than any thing terrible to one of your undaunted temper. I delivered my message, and in an instant disappeared.

I have repeated these circumstances to you, as a proof that all was real, and neither a dream nor a waking *reverie*, as you have persuaded yourself. But since no mortal knows this but yourself, and you concealed the greatest part of this relation from your gay friends, when you was so eloquent on the wonders of imagination; I hope this will find its wished success, and put you on the most exact preparation to meet, with a Christian fortitude, the greatest terror that mortal man can encounter. Though your life has been unstained with any base or unjust action, there are some levities in your conversation that require your speedy penitence and reformation; or seeming trifles will enlarge themselves into the greatest *terrors*.

It is a serious thing, my Lord, to die. You thought so, when, with the most tender concern, you saw me shivering and pale, anxious and fearful, on the very borders of death, doubtful to enter, and terrified at the darkness that hung on the gloomy

valley: when even the follies of my childhood, which was hardly past, and the slightest errors of my youth, sat heavy on my soul. And, oh! how unwillingly did my soul quit its agreeable mansion! how many soft engagements made me fond of life! the charming youth to whom I was contracted by my parents, detained me with his tears. Had angels beckoned me to the skie, that melting language would have tempted me back.

You little think, my dear brother, what regularity of the passions, what sanctity of manners, are necessary to take off the horrors of death, and make that gloomy monarch wear a smiling aspect.

Take this friendly admonition, and be for ever happy. Thus will that relation which is now between us, still subsist; and I shall be, in joys inexpressible, your sister to all eternity.

Serena.

To Philocles, from Ibrahim, a Turkish Bassa.

LETTER XVII.

IT was you, my dear Philocles, that Heaven made the instrument of my conversion to Christianity. But while I was in a state of mortality, it was impossible for me to know the greatness of my obligations to you, and to what height of felicity your friendly instructions directed me. How low, how disproportioned were my expectations to the grandeur of my present happiness! How superior is it even to those noble ideas your description gave me of celestial joys! As you converted me to, let me establish you in, the only true religion.

What reason have I to bless the moment that began our acquaintance, and the event that placed your character to my view in such an agreeable light! There was indeed something in your whole

conduct so artless, so sincere, so conformable to the strictest rules of truth and justice, that I at once quitted my prejudices to the faith you avowed. The Christian (which is not always the case) recommended Christianity.

The negotiations I had with you when you were consul for the states of Holland at Smyrna, gave me numerous instances of your honest and generous disposition. But nothing surprised me more, than seeing you venture your life, in a dreadful storm, to save a Portuguese, your mortal enemy, whose vessel was just overset, and himself ready to sink amidst the threatning waves, which he, till then, imagined less his foe than yourself. I was witness to the god-like action; and immediately concluded that there must be something divine in a religion, that could raise human nature to such an height of benevolence. It was all resistless conviction; my soul confessed its force, while I considered with what a becoming modesty you received the acknowledgments of your adversary, as calmly as for some trifling favour you would have accepted the thanks of your sincerest friend. You seemed conscious of having done nothing extraordinary; nothing but what was suitable to the constant disposition of your mind, if Heaven had favoured you with more frequent occasions of performing such heroic actions. You have a secret to make what is heroic, common.

It was a charity truly divine, that made you hazard your life, and expose it to the worst of tormentors, to rescue me from error. I was more inquisitive than the laws of the Alcoran allowed; which induced me to seek so many opportunities of conversing with you. Without the least caution, or regard to your own safety, you left yourself to the mercy of an infidel, satisfied my scruples, and importuned me to quit the Mahometan faith. Your conduct was all demonstration; and convinced me, that nothing but heavenly truth could inspire you with such fortitude, and kindle in your soul a charity

ty so perfectly disinterested. I was soon vanquished, and became a joyful proselyte to the Christian principles; nor found the least regret in leaving my native soil, to follow you to the Hague, where I might openly profess the faith I had embraced, and be in the right with impunity.

It was not long before a fever seized me. When I found the symptoms mortal, I sent for you to ease my burthened soul of the only care that oppressed it; but before you came, my speech was lost. However, the discovery was of such importance, that it still engages my concern; nor is there any person whose fidelity I can depend on like yours.

I purchased a beautiful Grecian slave, the first and only object of my love. Though she was in my power, I only attempted, by gentle methods, to gain her affections; but in vain. Her Christian belief still set the view of future rewards and punishments before her, and checked her soft inclinations. To conquer her virtue, I was induced to pervert her to the doctrines of the Alcoran. As absurdly as I reasoned, she was soon convinced, that her soul was as perishing as her body; and that there was no prospect of immortality for any of her sex; that present joys were all she could expect; and, in losing youth, and love, she lost the highest end of her creation. Too soon the fair apostate believed my detested doctrines, and took the poison from my tongue: renounced the great Messiah, and embraced the idle dreams of an impostor; gave up her claim to immortality, and yielded herself to my licentious wishes. Thus free from the restraints of religion, the fair libertine grew dissolute and profane beyond the limits of her sex. Her sportive wit, and boundless vanity, now ridiculed all that she once thought sacred. There was something so wild, so unnatural in her impiety, that I half repented my success; but never was truly sensible of the injury I had done her, till I was convinced of the truth of Christianity. It is this unspeakable damage that I hope you

will find some method to repair. It will not be impossible, by some of your friends, to find access to her. She is now at my brother's disposal. Her ransom will be easy, and a charity worthy your character. Your *charity* will redeem her person, your *example* her mind, from a more deplorable slavery.

Horatio.

LETTER XVIII.

To a son, from his deceased father.

If there is the least spark of filial gratitude in your breast; if there is any deference due to the memory of a once indulgent father, I charge you to recall the challenge you have sent.—What shall I say?—not to your adversary, but to your generous, your well-meaning friend. His admonitions were just; and the relation he gave you undoubted fact. You know in your conscience, the woman you vindicate has neither virtue nor reputation to defend; while you are daring death, and all the horrors that enfue, to justify a known falsehood, and purchase *shame* with *honour*.

If you are killed in this mad duel, the moment you breathe your last you will mingle with a society that make very different judgments of things, from what pass for maxims of honour among mortals. You will appear with a very ill grace, and on a most impertinent occasion, among the spirits of darkness, to whom you will be an eternal object of derision. The boasted beauty and charms of your mistress, will be but a poor excuse for your gallantry, though you should tell them in heroics, how *the world has been lost for a woman*.

These extravagancies will vanish with mortality; death will draw the veil, and place more serious scenes in view. You will find how cheaply you have

fold immortal glory; and curse the fond enchantment that led you on to destruction, deceiving that most, the love of which is now your inducement to ruin.

But ask yourself, What is the virtue of this fine lady, in defence of whom you are going with such bravery to die? What is this honour you are giving up your life, and all your hopes of salvation, to maintain? This guiltless lovely woman is only perjured to her marriage vows: this angel, this divine creature, does but deceive, does but expose to infamy, the best of husbands; she does but return his unequalled tenderness and constant affection to her, with artful fondness, and dissembled complaisance. She is but insensible to the merit of a man who is his country's ornament and pride; a person of the most graceful appearance, by nature formed to please the nicest of the fair sex; liberal and magnificent, obliging and sincere above all disguise; and who, from his own conscious honour, entirely confides in this artful woman, whom he raised from distress and obscurity. Charmed with her beauty and dissembled affection for him, he has indulged all her wild ambition, gratified her boundless vanity, and set no above limits to her expences, than you now to your folly.

This is the unhappy man you would expose to the jest of every senseless rake, by a public quarrel for the reputation of his wife. What *cruelty* could be so cruel as this *defence*!

And this is the dear innocent charmer, whose virtue you would justify, even by damning yourself, and murdering the generous Lindamor, your best, your experienced friend, whose sincerity has been his only crime. Be not so shamefully valiant. With what confusion must you draw your sword on a man, to whom you have such a series of obligations? How often has he supplied the necessities to which your extravagant gaming has reduced you, and discharged your debts of honour, as you call them?

And what was his offence now, but setting the character of an infamous [illegible] with a kind intention to reclaim you from your errors?

What a fatal influence had this diffolute passion had on your mind! How proftigate your manners! How unlike to the first part of your life, when a noble inclination governed your soul, and the lovely Erminia was all your joy! Oh! may her youthful charms recover you, and animate your mind to glorious actions! Your king, your country, the Protestant cause, the rights and liberties of human nature, now require your courage, and find better employment for your sword than to assassinate your friends. If you are truly brave, have the *courage* to forgive; the only way to conquer him.

Eusebius.

LETTER XIX.

To my Lord ——, from his deceased wife.

YOur present confinement by a slow recovery from a dangerous sickness, makes me to hope this may prove a time to prevail with you to pity the injured Sylviana, and be just to your obligations to her.

You once loved me, my Lord; and, while I lived, the guiltless passion had an effect on your whole conduct. But your grief for me gave a very extravagant turn to your mind; and, instead of leading you to a superior, a reasonable happiness, you have abandoned yourself to the heights of sensuality. You have ravished pleasure in every tempting disguise, refined on vice, and turned it into a science; and are too truly learned in it. Your stately rooms have sounded with nightly revels, and loose inchanting songs; your groves and fragrant gardens have been devoted to luxury, and infamous delights; the shades and fountains have been witness to scenes un-

becoming their chaste retreats; you have found out new ways to perdition, and set no limits to your dissolute inclinations, which survive *satiety* itself.

But, under this gay disguise, this triumph of vanity and madness, you have not known an interval of happiness that has been sincere. You could not conquer your own good sense, nor wholly forget the restraints of a noble education. I have been witness to your secret remorse, your penitent soliloquies; I have seen you recollect yourself, assume your native greatness, heard you, with the most moving eloquence, lament your folly, and assent to all the rules of temperance and virtue, assent to, and violate the same hour.

You have relapsed to your usual extravagance, till this dangerous sickness set the terrors of death in your view. It was then you confessed your injustice to the charming Sylviana. It hung on your soul, and appeared with a thousand aggravations. Nor will you ever know peace till you have confirmed your vows, and the absolute obligations you are under to marry her. Obligations to be happy, methinks, should be easily complied with.

How happy was the lovely maid in her humble circumstances! how blessed in her spotless innocence! till chance (in your rural excursions) led you in a luckless hour to the verdant shade, where you found her retired to screen herself from the mid-day sun, unmolested with the cares of love or ambition.

The natural elegance, the modesty, and easiness of her behaviour, fired your thoughts; and partly by violence, and partly with the most solemn vows of marriage, you ruined her.

But what unaffected sorrow, what remorse that fatal moment cost her, you have often witnessed. With what graceful pride has she since refused the least favour, and been inflexible to your softest persuasions on any terms but the marriage you promised her? How moving have her tears been! how just her complaints! what a pomp of virtue, what a

conscious greatness has appeared in her aspect; when, by your artful addresses, you have again endeavoured to seduce her! Nor presents, nor equipage, nor the most profuse settlement you have offered her, has tempted her to act in any character, but what virtue might own, in the view of heaven and the world. Her very crime with you should have the force of virtue in it.

Your quality, my Lord, does not absolve you from the divine laws, nor give a sanction to perjury; but rather enforces the obligations of equity and truth. In real merit, the fair Sylviana is not your inferior; but, if she were, Heaven does not dispense with the rules of justice on the account of airy titles, and imaginary distinctions of birth. The highest satisfaction that you can make may, perhaps, never give her that tranquillity she enjoyed in her first humble circumstances. Could you restore her lost innocence, she would be more blessed in that than in all the grandeur to which you can raise her. You may alleviate her misfortunes you cannot make full amends.

Nor can the loss of a tender parent be repaired. With a modest ingenuity the injured nymph confessed her crime to her plain mother; who was so oppressed with the thought of such an infamy, that in a few weeks she expired, and left her beauteous daughter to weep out her solitary hours. Her distrest demands your compassion; and, by an act of justice to her, you will secure your future peace and happiness, and shew your gratitude to

Mariana.

LETTER XX.

To Varius.

YOU have soon forgot my dying admonitions, and the promise you made me, to quit the

guilty amour you are still pursuing. Can you, with deliberation, with reflection, proceed in a design which must, if you succeed, plunge the beautiful Cleora in guilt and infamy, whom you love? What could infamy do more?

But with what horror ought you to reflect on the injury you are doing to the generous Alphonsus your benefactor! Is there nothing engaging in those titles! or rather, are they not words of the most sacred importance? Make it not the future interest of mankind to be your foes.

A man of your pretended honour could not bear the reproach of a lie; and yet you are acting a lie; practising the vilest treachery, and exposing a person of merit to ridicule. This, however unjust, must be the consequence of your success; while he, secure in his own worth and integrity, continues to caress the wretch that injures him. How can you support the stings of this kindness to you?

To this injured, this generous man, you owe the height of your fortune. It was his interest alone that brought you into public trust and reputation. To requite him, you are violating all the laws of humanity, bringing infamy on his family, and secretly endeavouring to rival him in the affections of his charming wife, the object of all his virtuous joys, of which, from whom could he more properly exact the protection than from you?

Can you unmoved recal the distress into which a crime of this nature plunged my heedless youth? What remorse, what confusion a moment's madness cost me? You was the only confident to whom I discovered the secret wound it gave my bleeding soul.

But how fatal was that one sally of an extravagant passion to all my future repose! despair and horror filled my breast, when I considered the injury I had done was beyond reparation. Retirement was no more my sanctuary from the noisy croud; the image of my crime pursued me with

inexpressible terrors; the innocent diversions of life were tasteless; music and wit had lost their charms; the proposals of pleasure were like jests to dying men, like recreations to the damned. Whatever decency appeared in my public behaviour, you were witness to the private intervals of my grief, and gave some relief to my anguish, by hearing my complaints with an obliging attention. But nature, after all its efforts, sunk; the pride of my youth yielded to the gloomy distemper. Yet the sincerity of my repentance found acceptance: and, as my last hour approached, some propitious spirit breathed peace and divine consolation to my soul, and in these gentle whispers reproved my infidelity:

Why should presumptuous man with feeble doubt,
And impotence of thought, mark out the bounds,
Of Clemency divine?—What tongue shall dare
Pronounce with impious vanity these words?
"Thus far, nor farther, thy exulting waves,
"O thou abyss of sacred love! shall roll:
"Here thy triumphant billows shall retire,
"Nor pass the bounds of human diffidence."

But however serene the last scene of my life was, I would not, for all the joys the lower creation could give, endure the distraction and remorse that one error cost me. Are you softened at the complaints of my misery? be terrified at the approaches of your own.

Thus warned, I hope you will retire. A thousand accidents have hitherto prevented your guilt, and crossed the madness of your love. Some pause of reason, some effort of virtue, may at last recover you from the paths of ruin. Comply with reason and virtue, with honour and friendship, with your own happiness, and that of others, with the interest of the *living*, and the desires of the *dead*.

Theodosius.

THOUGHTS ON DEATH.

Translated from the MORAL ESSAYS of Meſſ. DE PORT-ROYAL.

BEYOND the addreſs which men have never to think of death but as at a very great diſtance, nor to view it but in ſome other perſon, without putting themſelves one moment in the place of the *dying*; they have yet a farther art to delude themſelves, by forming ſuch a general and confuſed idea, as conceals from them all that is moſt terrible in death. They conceive little elſe of this ſtate but as a privation of ſenſe, and a ſeparation from the commerce of life; ſo that when they ſay a man is dead, they only mean, that they ſee him no more, and that he ſhares no longer in the affairs of the world. In a word, their idea of death is only formed on what men ceaſe to do in dying, and not on what they begin to do and feel, though it be that which conſtitutes its moſt dreadful circumſtance.

Death is indeed a privation of life and human action; but it is a privation which is felt, and produces ſurpriſing effects in the ſoul. In order to comprehend theſe effects, it is neceſſary to conſider, that while the ſoul is united to the body, its attention is divided by divers kinds of ſenſations, imaginations, and paſſions. It ſeeks the objects

which act on the body, according to their different manner of influence; and these different ways of perceiving are called *sensations*. On these the soul forms its ideas of all things to which it is united by its passions, and is always employed about these objects; and not only employed, but leans and reposes on them when it is not entirely united to God. For, not being made with a capacity to sustain itself, the soul necessarily seeks some foreign support. It was formed to know and love; but, finding nothing within sufficient to satisfy these inclinations, it is forced with some other objects to fill the void it finds in itself. Some of these objects make agreeable impressions on the sense; others content our curiosity and vanity; others relieve the mind by turning it from things which appear disgusting; some nourish its hopes, while others fortify it against its fears. The soul inclines to all the objects of sense, and is engaged and supported by them, in such a manner, that it cannot prove a separation without pain and emotion.

We are not always sensible of these ties; but the soul begins to feel them when it comes to be separated from what it loves. It has then a sense of the privation, proportionable to its union with them. So true is that maxim of St Augustine. "It is impossible to lose any thing without sorrow but what we possess without passion."

There are few persons free from an infinite number of these engagements; and though we are ignorant of them, till an actual separation discovers what they are, we may nevertheless conceive something, by separating ourselves from them in our thoughts, and imagining we are deprived of them by some accident.

For instance, take a person who does not seem to place his happiness in the objects of sight, and fancies they contribute nothing to the tranquillity of his mind; and suppose him suddenly deprived of his sight; though in all other circumstances happy, we

should find him affected with the loss as the greatest misfortune. The sight of mankind gives us some consolation, because we always discover in them a certain appearance of compassion, capable to give us succour in our necessities; which at least indulges our hopes, and those hopes excite a kind of secret joy.

The objects which, in some respects, are disgusting to the soul, and raise its fears and aversion, yet in other views fail not to sustain it. For tho' these uneasy passions cannot be altogether appeased, yet the imagination always furnishes them with means or hopes that quiet them; while the pursuit of those means, or the hopes of arriving at the end of their desires, employ and divert the mind.

All the objects to which the soul is joined, by the senses, imagination, reason, or passions, are its goods and riches; and even those we call poor, abound in these sort of goods. If they want palaces, or even a cottage, they have the sky, the sun, and stars; of which the prospect is so magnificent, that St Augustine says, "It is a greater blessing for "the poor to behold the heavenly luminaries, than "for the rich to view their golden roofs."

Thus, in the privation of some advantages, we comfort ourselves with others, true or false, that we either possess or hope for. As the body always finds something to bear it, since even when through weariness it falls to the ground, it there finds a support; so the soul, sick, and feeble, never fails of something to sustain it; and when there is nothing real, forms imaginary supports on which (vain as they are) it leans.

This necessity of human consolations is not peculiar to vicious men. In some degree, the virtuous want their relief. There are few persons so perfect, but they have still some remaining tie to the world. Fatigued by a long attention to spiritual objects, they are forced, in divers instances, to abandon themselves, and fly for satisfaction to their friends;

their children, their estates; to a field of their own planting, or an edifice of their own raising.

This is the condition of man in this life; which may help us to comprehend what death is with the effects it produces. We ought to look on it as the rupture of all that unites us to the creatures; a general separation from the objects of sense; the cancelling all human ties, and every pleasure the soul found in them; with a total privation of what it loved and enjoyed on earth. When a man dies, he loses not only what he called his wealth, but the firmament, the sun, the stars, the air, the earth, and all the rest of nature: he loses his body, and all those sensations that gave him pleasure; he loses his relations, his friends, and all mankind; he loses all relief, all support; and, in short, all the objects of his senses and passions.

Indeed, if the soul, in some degree united to these, finds itself also united to God by a holy love, tho' the privation of the creatures causes some emotion, yet it sinks not into despair. For this divine principle sustains it; and growing more active, confirms its hopes of being shortly united to, and overwhelmed in that abyss of pleasure, which alone can satisfy all its capacity of loving.

But who is able to conceive the state of the miserable soul, when it comes by death to be rent from all the objects of its inclinations; from all that sustained it during life, and finds nothing in itself on which to lean? Its propensities to love, and enjoy what it loved, become, beyond comparison, more lively and ardent, while all the soul was fond of escapes, and flies before her with an everlasting flight, without leaving the least hope of fruition. She loses all, finds nothing; all sinks under her, all vanishes and disappears for ever.

It is not possible, in this world, to comprehend a state so perfectly miserable. All one can say, to give some idea of it, is this: It is a terrible fall of the soul, by a sudden removal of all its supports;

it is an horrible famine, by a privation of its nourishment; it is an infinite void, by the annihilation of all that filled it; it is an extreme poverty, by the entire loss of that which was its wealth; it is a ghastly solitude, by the separation it finds itself in from all union and society; it is a dreadful desolation, by the want of all consolation; it is a cruel rupture, which violently rends the soul from every object of its love.

LETTERS

MORAL AND ENTERTAINING.

PART I.

LETTER I.

From Philario to his friend, relating his unhappy amour with Amasia.

My dear Chamont,

WHATEVER reproaches my past follies have deserved, I know my present misfortunes will raise your compassion.——The gentle Amasia is no more; she expired in my arms, and I have paid the last rites to her memory.

Your suspicions were just, that I had perverted and secretly kept her, contrary to all the friendly admonitions you gave me. The spring of my misery was my father's marrying me, at twelve years old, (O cursed avarice!) to a girl of ten, only to secure her vast fortune to his family. As I grew old, instead of liking I conceived an unconquerable aversion to the innocent creature; but no arguments could prevail with my father to break the contract, and I was as obstinate ever to complete the mar-

riage. Thus intangled, I grew uneasy; which my sister observing, to divert my chagrin, often carried me with her to visit a young lady, descended from a good family, but decayed in fortune, and obscure. Having never met her before in any public place, I was surprised at the sight of such an accomplished beauty; which her fine genius, and a thousand elegancies in her conversation, still heightened. Here the guilty inclination began, which, never presaging its fatal event, I cherished, and resolved to be happy in spite of the incumbrance of my young wife; who, without any matrimonial cares at heart, diverted herself with her babies and play-things; while I, privileged by my sister's discretion and intimacy, continued my visits to Amelia, whom we always found with her mother, the prudent and discreet Sophronia; whose only fault was being a little too reserved and severe in her temper. But Amelia had a natural disposition to books and solitude, with a temper rather serious and pensive than gay; which made the strictness of her mother's conduct, and her own confinement not easy. The little society she had, was with some grave and good women of Sophronia's acquaintance, who took care to inform her, that all the men of the present age were rakes and debauchés; and the young women no better, not hardly so good as they should be: and that conversing with such sage persons as themselves, was the most reputable thing she could do. Amelia assented to their wise maxims; my sister and I being the only acquaintance of a modern character that were admitted to the house. I made myself so agreeable to Sophronia, that I got the office of reader to the family; but, to my secret mortification, instead of plays, she confined me to history or sermons, tho' my books were better suited to the stage than the pulpit. However, my fair audience were pleased and entertained; and I would rather have taken orders than have lost my employment. But it was not long before cautious Sophronia saw through the

disguise of my zeal; and, observing a greater gaiety than was usual to Amasia's temper, in conversing with me, she told my sister freely her suspicions, intreating her, as she valued her daughter's reputation, to bring me no more with her. My sister, who was perfectly virtuous, was alarmed at the discovery; and would never, from that time, suffer me to accompany her.

I had now no way to let Amasia know the violence of my passion but by a letter; which unluckily fell into her mother's hands. By this, confirmed in her fears, she charged Amasia, as she expected her blessing, to send back any future billet from me unopened. This severe injunction she punctually obeyed till her mother's death, which happened in the midst of this adventure. She was suddenly seized; and finding her sickness mortal, she took the weeping fair by the hand, demanding, as the last proof of her duty, that she would, in the presence of the all-seeing Deity, promise never to converse with me, or receive my addresses.

This Amasia could not deny a dying tender parent. But, oh! how fatal to herself and me was this engagement! how wild was my grief when my sister informed me of the cruel obligation! However, I waited till the formalities of sorrow due to her mother's memory were past; when, with the impatience of love, I hasted to her house; and, bribing her servant, got admittance, without Amasia's knowledge, to her chamber.

Never did her charms appear to such advantage! The soft surprise, the modest confusion, the struggle between a tender inclination, and the restraint of conscious honour, gave her a thousand nameless graces. Whether the yielding beauty, with a gentle languishment, betrayed the passion she had long disguised; or whether recovering herself with all the pomp of virtue, she reproached my attempt, still she put on resistless charms: but, in every transporting variety of her temper, I saw my own advan-

tage; nor left the conquest unfinished. With deep repentance I now confess, it gave me an impious pleasure, to find love triumphant over all the pride of virtue. But Heaven soon avenged its cause, and humbled me in the height of my successful insolence.

I had not long continued my visits to Amasia, but an affair of consequence required my absence for some weeks. In the mean time, she was seized with a fever. As she found the symptoms mortal, she wrote, and immediately sent me this letter:

My dear Philario,

"WHERE are those ages of love, that heaven "and eternal series of tranquillity and joy, "with which you profusely flattered me? The "bright delusion, the visionary paradise, is already "lost; my sun is setting at noon; an untimely even- "ing draws its shadows over all my promised joys.

"That immortal bloom, those heavenly charms, "that you told me might bid defiance to sickness "and age, are already blasted by a cruel disease. "A sudden autumn has withered my prime; the "lilies droop, the roses die, chilling winter has fad- "ded my youthful spring.——But a few days more, "and I am dust.

"This truth sits heavy on my soul, and brings "my guilt, with its full aggravation, in view. My "mother's dying admonitions, my broken vows, "terrify me to distraction. My crime was not the "effect of ignorance or inadvertency. Pitying an- "gels set the penalties of eternal damnation, and "the recompence of an immortal crown, in prof- "pect before me; the caverns of death disclosed "their terrors, and the realms of celestial light "opened their glories to my active imagination. I "was forewarned, by the advice of a dying parent, "of the infamy and ruin to which this soft tempta- "tion has betrayed me. I had experienced the in- "fatisfactions of reason and virtue. But for you!

"ventured on present and future perdition, and "gave up my title to all the joys of immortality. "And now, ye regions of divine light, you have "no attractions for a mind so impure: I would only fly to you as a retreat from infernal misery.

"And yet, too charming youth! you engage my "affections, I would live; but (O fatal madness!) "I would live for you. By you I was seduced: "but, oh! may your soul stand clear of my ruin! "It is myself, not you, I would accuse.

"Last night, (if waking or in a dream I am uncertain,) my mother's venerable shade, majestic "in heavenly splendor, appeared to me, and bid "me *prepare for the silent tomb!*——What "preparation can I make? What penitence can "atone for repeated perjury? for crimes against the clearest convictions of heavenly light, and the "fraction of voluntary vows?

"What figures of speech could you make use of "to take off from vices like these their deformity! "what eloquence did you employ thus to pervert "my judgment? By what infernal enchantment "was I led on to my own destruction?——You "have undone me; but am I hopeless? Can you "make no reparation? Cannot you reverse the injury, and talk as well in the cause of heaven as "you did in the interest of hell?——Oh! make "the compassionate trial!——Can you pray?—— "Can you implore mercy for me? Perfusion dwell "upon your tongue! Could you be sincere, Heaven perhaps may hear.——My strength is spent! "——I faint!——Fly to my assistance, that at least "I may take a last farewel.

Amasia.

This letter surprised and distracted me. I knew not what I did or said; but I ordered my horses, and returned with all the speed that love could give me, to the idol of my soul; whom I found by intervals in her perfect senses, but in the agonies of death.

The melancholy scene will never quit my memory. Death came, attended by his real and fantastic horrors; he made his approach with every circumstance terrible to nature or reason. Never was the passage to his waste dominions more gloomy; never did a departing spirit quit the light of heaven with more reluctance!

"Oh! (she cried, grasping my hand,) whither "am I going? to what unknown regions? On "what desolate coasts am I doomed eternally to "wander? How dark the entrance! how long the "passage that opens before me!——See yonder sul-"len ghost beckons me away!——another pale "spectre summons me to the grave, and bids me "mingle with the dead.——How my senses wan-"der!——O for a month's, a week's, an hour's "reprieve!" Then, fixing her eager eyes on mine, she asked, "Cannot you procure this for me, after "all your boasted love!——I am cited to the su-"preme tribunal:——have you the hardiness to "appear for me?——The whole creation cannot "aid me in this extremity!" After which she lay "long speechless and convulsed; and, casting a "dismal glance at me, with a heavy groan, expired.

I could not refuse this sad recital to your request, and my avowed confidence in you. It is some kind of relief to pour my grief into your bosom, and to excite in yours a generous compassion which I know you feel for

The wretched *Philario*.

LETTER II.

From Cassander to a gentleman at Venice, relating the murder of his friend.

My dear Friend,

OH! why do I profane that sacred title! If you knew me, you would start, as if the fiends be-

law had given you that appellation.——But I must unmask myself, whatever horror the monstrous appearance gives you. Perhaps some sparks of pity may mingle with your aversion, when you find my misery bears some proportion to my guilt.

Oh! think what it is!——Imagine the dreadful scene I would unveil!——Recal the most tragical action that was ever represented on the stage; or the most bloody effect of fury that has been really perpetrated in human life.

Why do not the tears that fall from my eyes, stain the paper with a sanguine hue? Why does not blood instead of ink, flow from my pen in dismal characters, to mark my crime? Why should I express myself in the language of men, and not invoke the infernal furies to teach me their dialect, that I may give my guilt its proper aggravation? for mine is a deed of darkness, fit for the records of hell!——murder!——execrable murder!——This cursed hand, that trembles every nerve to relate it, gave the deadly wound!——Horror!——confusion!——Scarce can I refrain, by the wildest imprecations, to hasten that vengeance at which I tremble.——It will fall too soon, and with some terrible distinction; for mine was a sin of a superior note, marked with uncommon malignity.

In vain am I acquitted at a human tribunal, by the partiality of justice, and the solicitations of powerful friends, while, by my own conscience, and the divine laws, I am evidently condemned. What plea shall I find against the reproaches of my own reason, that restless monitor within? To what shelter shall I fly from unerring justice?——Hide me, ye rocks! cover me, ye mountains, from the pursuit of eternal vengeance!

My sin was an outrage against nature, a defiance of all the laws of friendship and humanity.——You dare not believe me, when I tell you it was my friend!——Oh distracting thought!——my friend!——the young, the gentle Antonio, that I murdered!

——I see him fall!——I see him bleed!——The soul flies quivering on his lips, his eye-balls roll in death!——I behold the gaping wound, the last convulsive pangs, the pale and senseless corpse extended on the ground! The dreadful scene is for ever new, and rises before me with insulting horror. The visionary terrors haunt my solitary retreats, and damp the joy of society. My days are unacquainted with peace, my nights with rest; the whole creation is an undistinguished chaos; the skies have lost their light, the fields their verdure; every charm is blotted from the face of nature; the sweetest odours no more refresh me; harmony, with its soothing tones, no more delights me; I sicken at the most luxurious banquets; the richest wines have lost their flavour; beauty no more invites, nor pleasure with her softest eloquence allures me.

Those fair gardens, where art and nature combine to rival all that has been fabled of the vale of Tempe, or the Cyprian groves, those soft retreats, which were late my pride and delight, now yield a gloomy prospect, and look like the seats of desolation and despair; for here the bloody fact was done; here I violated Nature's great original law, defied eternal justice, and sealed my own perdition.

You know with what frenzy I doted on the artful Marcella. She was the idol of my thoughts; with her I spent my gay licentious hours, regardless of my honour, my country, or my friends; for her I contrived gardens of pleasure, opened crystal fountains, raised bowers perfumed with every fragrant blossom, to entertain her; nor once believed she could be capable of ingratitude, till that fatal night when I surprised her with the unhappy Antonio.

I returned more early than usual from an appointed debauch; and not finding Marcella in her apartment, I ran immediately into a private garden, where she sometimes took an evening walk. The

moon shone clear; and at the entrance of an arbour, I saw her sitting with Antonio, loosely reclining his head in her lap. He rose and came forward smiling; whether with an air of insult or raillery, I did not stay to consider; but flushed with wine, and enraged with jealousy, I drew my sword, and stabbed him through the heart; while Marcella in a swoon lay cold and senseless at my feet.

My rage was spent in a moment, my amorous flame extinguished, and friendship, with all its force, returned triumphant on my soul. I threw myself on the ground by the dying youth, supported and embraced him, melted into tears, and called aloud on his pity to forgive me. My servants were alarmed; and rushing into the garden, beheld the bloody scene.

By this time Marcella was recovered from her swoon, and reproached my rashness; assuring me she had employed all her art to persuade him to comply with that fatal assignation. She frankly owned he had been long the object of her fondest desires, but that till then he had refused any secret appointment with her, from a sense of friendship to me, and justice to his young and beautiful wife, whom he sincerely loved.

This discovery distracted me. I cursed myself and her, and charged her, to fly my sight for ever, lest I should double my guilt, and inure myself to murder. I was so far from endeavouring to escape the rigour of the law, that I challenged it, called aloud for the ministers of justice, witnessed against my own life, and avowed the barbarous fact. But however I was cleared by a human verdict, I stand condemned by a higher and more righteous decision. My conscience tells me,

——The door is shut;
The Judge has pass'd my everlasting doom,
Which all created power can ne'er reverse.

My day's for ever gone, my sun is set
In final darkness, ne'er to rise again;
My summer's spent, eternal winter's come;
The season's past.———
On me no ray of mercy e'er will shine,
No smiling beam of hope will ever rise;
Justice divine, and self condemning guilt,
Consign me over to eternal woe.

What repentance is there for a wretch who can make no restitution? The injury I have done can never be cancelled. It was desperate, it was irreparable mischief, that I brought on the wretched Antonio. I cut off his space of trial, his probation for immortal joys, and tore him from all his future hopes of salvation. I perhaps surprised him with all his sins and unrepented follies on his head; his guilt might that instant be in its fullest magnitude, while I, with a more than infernal rage, seized the cursed moment, and sent an immortal spirit to hell. He may now be loading me with execrations; and sounding revenge through the caverns of darkness, against a miscreant that barred the gates of bliss, and opened his passage to the dungeons of misery and endless despair.

These are the horrible images that haunt, and sometimes drive me to the precipice of ruin. Last night, in a dead and silent hour, I took my sword, and went softly into my garden, resolving to stab myself (so wild are the intervals of my grief) on the same place where I murdered my friend. When I came near, I saw, or my fancy only made it real, a ghastly phantom resembling the murdered Antonio, standing on the very spot where I gave the fatal thrust; his countenance was sad and doleful, his motionless eyes fixed full on mine, while his hand pointed to the well-imitated wound on his breast.

The sight withered my strength, and the sword dropped from my trembling hand; guilt made me

a coward, and with a childish fear I hastily retired to my chamber, calling one of my servants to attend me. So unlike am I grown to myself, I start at a shadow, and shudder at the presage of a dream; am surrounded with ill omens, and tormented with more direful forebodings within.

We talk of racks, of hissing snakes, and of gnawing worms; but all the emphasis of human language cannot describe the tortures of an accusing conscience. The united force of art and nature cannot yield the least relief. The light of paradise could not cheer me; the songs of angels would but heighten my remorse, and augment the exquisite anguish: the gloom of impenetrable night, and the sound of eternal tempests, would sooner soothe these unutterable agonies.

What privilege is my being? Why am I curst with immortality? Oh that my severe Judge, my omnipotent adversary, would speak me again into my primitive *nothing*, and with one potent word finish my existence!

"The beasts are happy; they come forth, and keep
"Short watch on earth, and then lye down to sleep.
"Pain is for man; and, oh! how vast a pain
"For crimes that made the Godhead bleed in vain!"
Dr Young.

But why do I think it in vain for me? Am I of all human race exempted? Am I the only distinguished sinner excluded from the benefit of that infinite atonement? Am I on earth, or shut up in the infernal prison? Oh stay, thou glimmering beam of hope, with one heavenly visit cheer my benighted soul. An uncertain *if*, a flattering possibility, would be a momentary heaven to me; it would be redemption from hell, pardon to a reprobate spirit. And yet,

If I must perish, prostrate at thy feet
The humble victim of thy wrath shall fall,

Imploring mercy ſtill; for mercy reigns
Triumphant in thy nature: 'tis thy boaſt,
The attribute that reigns on this ſide hell.

My dear Clerimont, excuſe my freedom. It is natural for miſery to complain. Had I been acquainted with a perſon of more piety and generous compaſſion than yourſelf, I had ſpared you the reading of this melancholy relation, to which your long ſtay at Venice has made you a ſtranger.

Adieu, I know you will pity

The wretched CASSANDER.

LETTER III.

To Belinda from Sylvia, to inform her of the reaſons of her ſudden retreat into the country.

MY dear Belinda, I am indeed got back again,

" To harmleſs plain work, and to croaking rooks,
" Old faſhion'd halls, dull aunts, and godly books.
Mr Pope.

to a view of Nature in that ſimplicity which you rally ſo agreeably. But it is here I have recovered my peace, and am again grown a reaſonable creature; to which thoſe godly books that you ſeem to have ſuch a notion of, have very much contributed; particularly Biſhop Tillotſon.

I ſee you ſmile, not in malice, but good nature, at the ſober confeſſion, and want of delicacy in the choice of my reading. It diverts you, I know, that I ſhould let Dryden and Otway lye ſtupidly by me, and impertinently ſpend an hour in reading a ſermon; that when I am ſo well at eaſe in this world, it ſhould ever enter into my head to think of

another; and that, in the bloom of eighteen, I should have such a gloomy disposition, as to think myself mortal. And, if you will forgive me, I will own, that I sometimes read the Bible, in contempt of all modern refinements, and hope to form my life on that antiquated scheme. These are, I confess, my dear Belinda, a very unfashionable set of thoughts, and have nothing in them modish or polite.

I believe you will be very inquisitive to find what has put these odd, these strange unaccountable whimsies into my brain.

It is love! (you start—you pity—you pray for me;) but it is love, a tender hopeless passion, that has had this surprising effect! It is an absolute despair of being happy in this world, that has put me on endeavours to secure the happiness of the next. Could I have possessed the idol of my soul, I had been at rest, and had lost the relish of superior joys.

But mine, with confusion I own it, was a criminal affection, forbid by earth and heaven. My bliss was prohibited by laws human and divine. This confession will surprise you; but could you know the severity of my conduct, you would excuse me. I have torn myself from the sight of the lovely youth for ever, though I could have lost the light of the sun with less reluctance. My hasty retreat into the country was free and voluntary; and not, as was thought, the effect of my father's command. I was sincere, Heaven is my witness, in my desire to free myself from the criminal passion; and I thought the most certain way to conquest, was by flight.

You know the tour my brother made to Paris brought him acquainted with Monsieur le Comte de R——: and when he came into England, my brother returned with his family. I was in town, and waited on Madame la Comtesse, who did me the honour to detain me some time with her.

Monſieur le Compte was one of the handſomeſt and beſt bred men in the world, and had as much of the Engliſh gravity as was agreeable to my own temper; which made me find his converſation very grateful and entertaining; nor had I the leaſt ſuſpicion that there was any hazard in ſuch a harmleſs ſatisfaction. I had converſed in town with as much freedom as a virtuous education allowed; and kept an equal indifference, without the leaſt inclination to love, or even pretending to hate any mortal man.

The Compte was perfectly well bred; and my vanity made me interpret every little turn of gallantry, as the mark of ſome peculiar value and innocent friendſhip he had for me. Any other thought would have ſhocked my delicacy, and put me on my guard, againſt the guilty paſſion I found kindling in my own breaſt; which, inſtead of oppoſing I indulged, as gratitude, and a juſt ſenſe of merit.

But I was ſoon ſenſible of the deluſion, and how eaſily vice betrays an unguarded mind, under the ſpecious diſguiſe of virtue. I found this freedom of converſation would prove fatal to all the peace and innocence of my mind, which had now loſt its native calmneſs: and I began to experience all the fantaſtic effects of ſpleen, vapours, caprice; in ſhort, an uneaſineſs with myſelf, and every thing elſe in the world, the charming Comteſſe herſelf not excepted.

But this ſet my guilt before me in its full aggravation. Envy and deceit had till now been ſtrangers to my breaſt; which made me ſtart at the monſtrous forms. Every new favour from Madame la Comteſſe reproached me with violating the truſt and confidence ſhe had in my truth and virtue, and for having a wiſh, that ſhe had been leſs beautiful and deſerving. The affection and intimacy with which ſhe treated me, gave me an horror for myſelf; and I was again generous and ſincere, and, as I thought, perfectly confirmed in virtue: till the charming Comte appeared; when I found myſelf jealous, un-

juſt, and perverted to vice in a moment.

However, I diſguiſed my folly, from a ſecret delicacy in point of reputation, and an unaffected ſenſe of honour. I am aſhamed to tell you I had a thought that needed a diſguiſe, though it was involuntary and unallowed. But I was an ill diſſembler, and have ſome reaſon to believe the real diſpoſition of my heart was perceived by the Comte; who, one evening, ſurpriſed me reclined on the ſide of a fountain, repeating theſe lines:

Come, bleſs'd religion, with thy angel's face,
Diſpel this gloom, and brighten all the place!
Drive this deſtructive paſſion from my breaſt,
Compoſe my ſorrows, and reſtore my reſt!
Shew me the path the ſainted virgins trod,
Wean me from earth, and raiſe my ſoul to God!
No more let guilty love my heart inflame!

The Comte underſtood Engliſh perfectly well: but I recovered myſelf with as good a grace as I could, and put on more gaiety and aſſurance than was indeed natural to my diſpoſition; and, to conceal my diſorder, left him with precipitancy, and returned to the Comteſſe; who was in her apartment, reading the ſtory of Rhetea in the life of Cyrus. She aſked me, *How I liked it?* The queſtion, I am perſuaded, was accidental; but, with ſome confuſion, I anſwered, *That I thought it well told.* However, it awakened my remorſe, and gave me an exquiſite ſenſe of the injuſtice of my ſecret inclinations.

From this moment I reſolved to go back into the country, to conceal and conquer my folly. The tenderneſs and unaffected concern the Comteſſe expreſſed in parting with me, confirmed my virtue, and gave me a ſecret confuſion for the injuſtice of having wiſhed her leſs happy. The calmneſs and ſerenity of my ſoul ſeemed to be reſtored; and I had left the place a conqueror, if the Comte had

not led me to the coach, and by an accidental sigh, and a sort of a serious air in his face, given my mind a softer turn, and convinced me of the vanity of human confidence, and that I had triumphed without a victory.

But the retirement of the country, and serious reflection, soon freed me from the tumultuous effects of a guilty passion. The scene altered with infinite advantage, and all grew peaceful and serene. I am now reconciled to myself, and find an ineffable satisfaction in the silent approbation of my own conduct; a satisfaction superior to all the empty applause of the crowd. I reflect with pleasure on the happy change. My soul seems now in its proper situation; and, conscious of its dignity, looks above this world for its rest and happiness. I am almost in a state of insensibility with regard to mortal things; and have fixed my views on those infinite delights which will be the certain rewards of virtue.

What is there here to fill these vast desires?
Should Fancy all her dazzling scenes display,
Our wishes unconfin'd, would wander still
Beyond the limits of these narrow skies,
In search of boundless and immortal joys.

Adieu, my dear Belinda. As long as I leave you to the quiet possession of the dear town, and its dear joys, you will not envy me all that a gay imagination can form of future pleasures. ——— I have trusted you with the inmost secrets of my soul, and know I can depend upon your fidelity. I am

Your unalterable friend,

Sylvia.

[*See the sequel of this story in Letter 5. Part II.*]

LETTER IV.

To Eusebius, from a Deist.

WHERE shall I find rest? The wide creation denies it. I have run through all the varieties of human folly, and searched every vanity below the sun; I have tried what was to be found in madness; women, wine, and frolic have divided my hours; and I am now trying what satisfaction wisdom and philosophy can yield. You have made me at last a convert to natural religion, and turned me into a sort of a virtuous Heathen. Morality in its practice is no longer my aversion. I begin to think reason and immortality the highest advantages of humanity. That there is a God, all nature cries aloud through all her works; and while I am attending those sacred dictates, in such raptures as these, I often address myself:

To the unknown GOD.

WHate'er thou art, thou Excellence unknown!
'Tis thee thro' all thy various works we seek.
These secret languishments, these fierce desires,
Howe'er licentious, free and unconfin'd,
Pursue unseen an object infinite.
Through ev'ry fair disguise the leading GOD
Allures our eager souls. That rosy blush,
Those sparkling eyes, and soft enchanting smiles,
Receiv'd their charms from thee, beauty is thine,
In all its conqu'ring powers. In thee
We trace up pleasure to its secret source.
We meet thee in thy balmy western breeze,
The fragrance of the spring, the spicy isles;
And all Arabia breathes its sweets from thee.
From harmony to harmony we rise,

To that superior skill which tun'd the spheres,
Gave melody to Gabriel's heavenly lyre,
And every moving grace to Rolli's song.
Whatever sacred force in music lyes,
The dying strain that calms the wildest care,
Or loftier note that prompts to glorious deeds:
Th' inspiring GOD dwells in the mystic sound,
And charms and captivates the list'ning soul,
Through all her soft capacities of joy.
But what art thou, the secret spring of life,
Supreme in all perfections, though unknown?
More lovely than the fairest of thy works;
For thou art still beyond similitude:
Still rising with distinguish'd eminence,
In perfect beauty, and unrival'd glory.
But what those beauties, what those glories are,
No mortal eye has seen, nor boldest flight
Of fancy in her gayest scenes conceiv'd.
Some soft celestial echoes from afar,
Some glimm'ring rays with a reflected light,
Attract our souls, and kindle warm desires,
Impetuous wishes and aspiring hopes,
Which own no bounds, but infinitely free,
Break through created limits with contempt,
And seek the great Original of bliss.
But, oh! if Love—if Love's the boasted name,
And darling attribute, reveal thyself,
Unfold the heavenly wonders of thy face,
And stand in open majesty confess'd!
Why was I form'd with these aspiring thoughts,
And elegant desires, these boundless aims,
That reach at nothing short of GOD himself?
If 'tis a bliss impossible to man;
If thou wilt never fill these vast desires,
Why were they rais'd? This eminence of thought
Is but my torment!——Oh! recall again
This glorious curse, this thankless gift, my reason!
This immortality, my dread, my horror!
Far rather had I flourish'd in a plant,
And only reach'd a vegetable life.

Open'd my bloſſoms to the riſing ſun,
And dropp'd their beauties e'er the evening cloſe;
Or had I mounted with the feather'd race
In heights of air, or with my fellow-brutes
At freedom rang'd the trackleſs deſart o'er;
Slept in a den, or ſtretch'd my careleſs bulk
Secure in open fields, heedleſs of good
Or evil paſt, or preſent, or to come!
Oh, envy'd lot to mine! if I muſt live
Eternal years excluded from thy face
Be it in earth, or air, or in the deep,
Where thou art abſent, every place is hell!

The fields and woods are often witneſſes to theſe ſoliloquies, while I fly from man, to converſe with the great Spirit of nature; for you have at laſt convinced me of a divine preſence, with whoſe immenſity I am ſurrounded. To this conſcious Mind I ſometimes addreſs myſelf. With pleaſure I grow acquainted with this propitious Being, and adore him as the ſpring of my exiſtence. I ſeem to find ſome new capacities of happineſs awake in my ſoul. I languiſh for ſome unknown joys, ſome yet unexperienced pleaſures; and grow confident, that the power who raiſed theſe deſires, will at laſt gratify them.

That ſilence, that ſelf-reflection and retirement, that was lately my horror, is now become my delight; while I am attending the dictates of reaſon, and ſincerely endeavouring to know the will of that divine Mind, who muſt be too benefiicent to leave me in my preſent doubts, while I am ſincerely ſeeking the heavenly illumination.

Thus far, my dear Euſebius, your arguments have had ſucceſs. I have the higheſt obligations to you, for not ſuffering me to degrade myſelf into the rank of animals, and for perſuading me to aſſume the dignity of a reaſonable creature. In that capacity, I am

Your moſt obliged humble ſervant,
Philander.

LETTER V.

To Mrs ——, from Amoret, giving an account of her criminal passion for Sebastian.

Madam,

HOW shall I begin? What language can paint the confusion of my thoughts? which could you be sensible of, it would be some apology for the fatal secret I would discover. I am yet but a modest sinner; and can neither excuse, nor dare disguise my guilt from one, who till now has shared all the secrets of my soul.

Oh, think what I would say! Imagine what it is I find such reluctance to discover, and which I must discover, though it cost me all your esteem! your esteem, which has been my pride and happiness. But even that I will resign, rather than suffer you to injure your own character, by a continuance of that friendship I have forfeited.

I am not that modest innocent person you believe me. There is no disguising my infamy, nor recovering my lost honour.

I know you are surprised; you hardly credit me: you would fain believe I have belied myself; and what I have told you is the effect of spleen, melancholy, any thing but truth. Would to Heaven that it was all frenzy, and wild imagination! that I were innocently unhappy! that I had lost my reason, and kept my virtue!

Oh, her only virtue! thine's a sacred flame,
And still my soul pays homage to thy name.

Ye chaste and holy thoughts, that once possessed my soul, return again! Return, ye smiling scenes of innocence and peace! Ye secret consolations of

religion! ye gentle whispers of conscience, speak peace again to my disquiet'd breast!

I have not yet begun my fatal story.—Oh, let it never be told! let it be lost in eternal oblivion!—But that is impossible; it is registered on my heart.

In what dark cavern shall I hide my head?
Where seek retreat,—now innocence is fled?

If my penitence had obtained pardon from Heaven, the public would speak my infamy aloud. How am I fallen! from what height of reputation to the lowest contempt! This, to a mind that still retains the nicest sense of honour, is an affliction insupportable. I have no refuge from the insults of the world but solitude; and thither the thoughts of my guilt and infamy pursue me. The country-shades, the seats of tranquillity and peace, afford me no relief.

Alone through unfrequented shades I rove,
And hope the sweets of solitude to prove:
But at my sight each verdant prospect wears
A gloomy view; and every plant appears
To bend its top o'erchang'd with dewy tears.
What joy can I in these recesses find?
What beauteous scenes can please a guilty mind?
In vain the sun his morning-pride displays,
I turn my eyes, and sicken at his rays:
The silver moon, and sparkling fires by night,
Torment me too with their officious light.

Heaven and earth seem to reproach me, and join with the convictions of my own soul, which fully approves the rules I have violated. To what has my folly reduced me? Where shall I seek for peace, when I am at variance with myself, and my practice is inconsistent with those heavenly precepts to which my mind assents?

I would tell you the story of my ruin, but every circumstance fills me with confusion. You know my seducer, and what a train of artifices he has employed to compleat it. You, Madam, gave me many gentle admonitions; but I was too secure in my own resolution, and that disguise of honour, which the false Sebastian always avowed, and never with more assurance, than when his flattery betrayed me into this infamy.

Time and place, the evening gloom, and verdant shade, every circumstance conspired to my undoing. The whispering gales, the falling fountains, the green retreats, and flowery scenes, heightened the soft temptation. All nature seemed to soothe the tender passion, and gave my charming lover new advantages. His form, his aspect, acquired unusual graces, and his language was all enchantment.

"——— And oh! his charming tongue
"Was but too well acquainted with my weakness.
"He talk'd of love, and all my melting heart
"Dissolv'd within my breast."——— *Otway.*

Whither is my imagination wandering! Ye powers of chastity assist me! blot this guilty scene for ever from my soul! Let the remembrance of these criminal delights no more return! let them be lost in darkness and oblivion! Let me be entertained with more pure and lasting joys, in some humble retreat, far from the noise and thoughtless amusements of the world! I ask not princely bowers, or artful walks; let me pass my hours in some unfrequented shade, where the images of vanity and sin may never enter! Oh, celestial life! how do these peaceful scenes soothe and flatter my soul! through what inchanting paths does my imagination stray! Ye vain grandeurs of the world, adieu. Adieu, ye idle amusements, and fantastic pleasures. What shadows do you now appear! how

unsubstantial to these serious prospects of bliss! Let me dwell unmolested here! Let me lose the remembrance of this busy world, and hear no more of its distracting follies! Here let me attend the happy period, that shall untie the bond of life; and then,

Let some fair spirit, form'd alone for love,
That's happy in its full enjoyment,
Tune the celestial lute, and gently sing
A *requiem* to my soul, call out my life
By the sweet powers of heav'nly harmony;
While on a rosy couch I rest my head,
And in the languishments of love divine
Resign my breath, and wake in endless joy.

In the height of distraction, I subscribe,

Madam,

Yours, &c.

LETTER VI.

From Evander to a Libertine.

YOU must excuse me, my Lord, if I should not yield to the conviction of your raillery, nor damn myself in mere good manners, and ceremony. I must confess, never was a bad cause defended with more wit and vivacity; but I dare not venture on eternal misery, in the gaiety of my heart, nor give up my hopes of salvation for a jest.

Nor can you blame me, my Lord, for being serious in things, which, to my apprehension, are the greatest realities; though, to your politer imagination, they may appear but dreams and chimeras. Till I can change my opinion, I should act unreasonably, to desist from my pursuit of what I think the noblest end of human actions.

As for your objection against my scheme, that it is a happiness future and uncertain; yours, my Lord, has the same disadvantage.

Is there any mortal that thinks himself happy in any present enjoyment? Some uneasy circumstance or other mingles itself with all sublunary bliss. It is some future expectation that engages the mind. To-morrow's assignation with a jovial friend or mistress, depends on so precarious a thing as life; which thousands, before another rising sun, must resign; and yours, perhaps, may be among the destined number; and in that very moment your expectations perish, and prove as visionary as the celestial pleasures and divine entertainments that you turn into ridicule.

On your scheme, it is but a breath betwixt a man, a reasonable being, the lord of the creation; and a clod of earth, a shadow, a mere nothing. If the machine should keep a proper situation to drink, to sing, to laugh, and dance; a thousand other chances may start up to disappoint the promised joy; which if you reach, fruition itself will deceive your hopes, and leave you nothing but anxiety and remorse.

This is what can never happen to me, though all my bright expectations should prove a fiction. As soon as I reach the fatal period, I shall be past reflection. My gaudy hopes and being will end at once, and leave me for ever insensible of my loss. In the mean time, as long as the dream of life lasts, the very prospect of boundless and immortal pleasures must give the mind a greater satisfaction in mere speculation, than all those fleeting imperfect enjoyments, whose fallacy you every moment discover.

Let my plan of happiness be ever so visionary, it is noble; let it be invented by the craft of priests or politicians, it is superior to all the luxury by which the greatest libertine ever proposed to gratify his desires.

Riches and grandeur, wine and mirth, music and beauty, are the height of your wishes: but all these either fatigue the mind with anxiety, or languish and sleep on the senses. You have often owned to me, that a series of these enjoyments has left you nothing but vanity and vexation; and have, in your reasonable intervals, confessed, that these are no more than specious names, and shadows of some *original good*, that the mind, through every disguise, pursues.

This is the supreme excellence after which my soul aspires. If it is imaginary, the mind must yet be enlarged, by grasping at the enjoyment of infinite happiness. For I dare confess, my end is the same with yours: it is pleasure we both pursue; and as at present it consists chiefly in expectation, mine must surpass yours by the proportion of its object.

You have set your night for the opera, to hear Faustina sing; I expect the period, when the curtain of mortality shall be drawn, and the scenes of eternal glories open, and angels solace me with celestial harmony.

The flowery spring returns to love, and your soft retirement in one of the fairest seats in England entertains you; while my imagination wanders thro' the heavenly paradise, and recreates itself by blissful streams among the trees of life.

You attend the happy period, that, after long impatience, shall give the charming Zephalinda to your vows; while a diviner flame animates my soul in the search of infinite perfection.

But tell me whence this wond'rous flame began,
Ye angels, who behold the face of God!
I call the worms my brethren, and confess,
Corruption is my father; yet high as yours
My wishes rise; the same divine ambition
The same bright object kindles my desires.
O lovelier than the fairest of thy works,

Nothing below thyself, great as thou art,
Exalted and supreme—nothing below
Thyself can ever fix my restless thought.
These faculties were made alone for thee,
Or I had never rais'd a wish so high.
Necessity of nature leads me on;
My reason has no theme, my life no end.
Love, the superior passion of my soul,
Finds nothing equal to its dignity.
Give all the sun goes round to those that seek
A happiness beneath the sovereign good.
One gentle look, one heavenly smile of thine,
Has blotted every charm from nature's face,
And faded all the glory of the world.
Why dust thou bid me listen to the voice
Of nature, in her just melodious round?
Why dust thou bid me trace the flow'ry fields,
The spring's gay verdure, or with wond'ring eyes
Survey the circle of the firmament?
What is there lovely on the spacious earth,
Or in th' ethereal round compar'd to thee?
Compar'd to thee, the stars can boast no light;
The sun itself, in modest clouds conceal'd,
Pays homage to the great eternal spring,
Of sacred life, and uncreated light.
Whate'er at utmost stretch the mind of man
Can form, in its unbounded range of thought,
Of bright, or fair, or justly regular,
When fancy launches out to worlds unknown,
And paints beyond created beauty fair,
Still thou art fairer and more perfect still.

I know, my Lord, you will pardon this poetical excursion, since I have been led to it by your example.

I need not make an apology for continuing to insult you with my privileges, since I have no design in it but what is abstractly disinterested and charitable. A place of trust is honour, employs your thoughts, and calls for your perpetual attendance;

and when you think yourself secure of the gaudy trifle, your pretensions may be lost by a momentary caprice. But my expectations run higher than any dignity this world can boast. It is a celestial crown and kingdom that fires my ambition; I am in pursuit of infinite honours, and grasp the glories of immortality.

You see, my Lord, in every respect, in love and glory, I have the advantage of you. Suppose my pretensions as visionary as you will, nothing can be more exalted than such a notion of happiness. It is endless and complete, unclouded with pain or sorrow; whereas you can never boast of being perfectly at ease, nor to taste pleasure unmingled with many mortifying evils. In your gayest flights, you cannot flatter yourself with such views.

But this prospect is all peaceful and secure; not a moment's anxiety shall rise, to break the series of eternal joy. Whatever holy cheat laid the plan, it is no dishonour to be thus deluded. Let poets, priests, or politicians, be the inventors, a thousand times blessed be the happy genius that provided this relief to soften the chagrin of mortal life; when, tired and sick of all mortal vanities, the mind reposes itself in fragrant bowers, sports on flowery lawns, and wanders through Elysian groves; when the raptured fancy drinks at the fountains of life, and bathes in rivers of immortal pleasure!

Death, the gloomy period of all your hopes, in the height of your luxury, and most jovial entertainments, insults your imagination with his horrid aspect. But this ghastly phantom, this universal terror, brightens into a smile; and in an angel's form, beckons me away to endless rest. That untried gulph, that you expect will at once swallow up your joys and your existence, appears to me a passage to undecaying life and pleasure.

And let it still be granted, that my expectation of future bliss proves a fiction, and Christianity a mere delusion; I shall be insensible of remorse or shame

for my credulity; and shall lye down, as gloriously with the clods of the valley, and sleep as sweetly in my primitive dust, as your Lordship.

But, oh! should the objects of the Christian faith prove true, what a wild hazard do you run! What limits will your confusion find! Your shame will be as lasting as your misery. You will reproach yourself for ever, and be exposed to the derision of the wretched society to which you are joined.—— *Il n'y a rien plus reel que cela, ni de plus terrible, faisons tant que nous voudrons les braves.* "There "is nothing more real than that, nothing more ter- "rible, let us put on ever so many stout airs!"

I have, you find, obeyed your commands, and sent you my thoughts on this subject; to convince your Lordship how much I am

Your devoted humble servant,

Evander.

LETTER VII.

From Herminius to his sister, acquainting her with the happy effects of his passion for Cleora.

My dear Sister,

IT is with great pleasure I obey your command, in letting you know the disposition of my heart to the charming Cleora. To one whose thoughts were less refined than yours, my discourse would be incredible; but you are a sort of Platonic, and may perhaps approve the effects of a generous passion, and give credit to the reformation it has made in my life.

You will forgive me, Madam, for being once in the right, when I have dissented from you, since it is the only instance I have to boast of. Had I been

governed by your advice, and led the fair Cleora, inſtead of converſing with her, I might have been an unreformed libertine. But me let virtue in my view with its moſt charming advantages. I ſaw an angel in her form, and heard celeſtial muſic in her voice. She was the meſſenger of the ſkies to convert me; I owned the credentials, and yielded to the heavenly inſpiration.

You know, my dear ſiſter, that her dawning beauty had made an impreſſion on my heart before I went to travel.

"I watch'd the early glories of her eyes,
"As men for day-break watch the eaſtern ſkies."
Dryden.

I left England with the flattering hopes of finding her free at my return, and with a full intention to make my addreſſes to her. While I ſtaid at Rome, that imperial ſeat of vice, the only looſe amour I had was with a beautiful Italian, who ſomething reſembled the matchleſs Cleora, who was ſtill the miſtreſs of my reaſonable affections.

But how great was the anguiſh of my ſoul, when, after all my gay expectations, the firſt news that ſurpriſed me at my return was, that ſhe was juſt married to Philaret! the man that of all the world I would not have hated or injured; a man that had every amiable quality, and was the pride and joy of all his acquaintance; nor could I forget ſome former obligations his popular intereſt had laid on me. In this exigence I reſolved to diſpenſe with the ceremony of paying my compliments to him, that I might avoid the ſight of his lovely bride; nor did I frequent any public place where I was likely to meet her.

But at laſt the fatal interview came; and in the drawing-room, ſparkling as an angel, I ſaw the lovely creature. From this moment I became an apoſtate to virtue; and, ſecretly renouncing all the ties

of truth and honour, resolved, with great deliberation, to be a villain. This noble design was the subject of my retired contemplations. With what wild, what impious soliloquies, have I whispered to the groves and streams, wishing the laws of Heaven cancelled, and the state of nature, in the fiction of a golden age, real: these senseless lines have often expressed my infamous raptures *.

O siecle plus heureux mille fois pour les hommes,
Que le siecle dur ou nous sommes!
Non parceque la terre en cet age parfait
Donnoit tous les fruits sans culture,
Que les fleuves etoient de lait,
Que le miel dans nos bois couloit sur la verdure;
Mais parceque l'honneur, ce tyran des nos ames,
Cette trompeuse idole, et ce phantom vain,
N'avoit sur les cœurs une pouvoir souvrain,
Et ne s'opposoit pas aux amoureuses flammes.

Such were my secret extravagances, the entertainments of my solitary walks: but in the height of my folly, Heaven did not entirely abandon me.

I took all handsome opportunities to follow and converse with the fair Cleora; a favour she never refused me; if she had, I should have entertained more hopes, than from the manner in which she treated me. I attended her coach, her chair, haunted her at public places, ogled, stared, sighed, and practised all the modern fopperies of love; which

* O happy age! a thousand times more bless'd,
Than the hard state by mortals now possess'd!
Not because bounteous Nature did then yield
Her fruits spontaneous to the soil untill'd,
Nor that the rivers flow'd with milky waves,
Nor that the trees dropt honey from their leaves:
But because Honour, phantom of controul,
False airy idol, tyrant of the soul,
Then to our am'rous flames no bounds consign'd,
Then knew no sov'reign power o'er the mind.

she never thought it worth her while to observe; and, to my great mortification, I found I neither pleased nor offended her. All my dumb eloquence, and mute address was lost on her: she minded it no more, nor perhaps so much, as she would the antics of a monkey. I might give myself what postures and airs I thought most becoming, and act the indolent, or languishing lover, without interruption: she looked as if she had no manner of apprehension what I was doing, or what I intended. My breath had been as well employed, in talking of darts and flames, to the plants and trees; the jargon was so perfectly unintelligible to her, that she either answered nothing to the purpose, or turned the discourse to some grave moral subject.

And as she had the finest turn of wit, and the most graceful manner of speaking in the world, every thing she said made an impression on my soul: every vice on which she set a mark of infamy, tho' ever so modish, lost its credit with me; and every virtue, though ever so severe, seemed practicable with her applause.

The manner in which she treated my passion, set me in a very ridiculous light to myself. The vanity appeared unpardonable, that inspired me with the hopes of rivalling the happy man, to whom, in the sight of Heaven, with her vows, she had sincerely given her esteem and tenderest affections. Whatever regard was due to such distinguishing merit as Philaret's, she gave him. Nothing could be more soft and engaging than her whole behaviour to him. Her modesty was unaffected, truth and justice appeared in all her actions. In the gayest bloom of youth, and triumph of beauty, she practised the strictest rules of piety. These joined to the most gentle disposition, and a genius turned to every thing that is beautiful and polite, makes her one of the brightest characters of the age.

A thousand times blessed be the heavenly Power that kept me back from the ruin I courted; and,

by the example and converſation of the lovely woman, made me a proſelyte to virtue, and guided me to a rational and laſting happineſs!

But, my dear ſiſter, this fortunate event ſhall not encourage me to contemn your advice on any future occaſion; and in this inſtance I know you will forgive,

Madam,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

Herminius.

LETTER VIII.

From Bellamour to Carlos, relating the ſtory of his love to Almeda.

I Am glad to find you ſo entirely ſatisfied, ſo completely bleſſed, amidſt the noiſe and amuſements of the town. I congratulate your enjoyment of aſſemblies, operas, and maſquerades. But all your boaſted pleaſures cannot raiſe my envy at preſent, nor tempt me back from the country.

My mind is in ſuch a fantaſtic diſpoſition, that I find more ſatisfaction in talking to trees, ſtreams, and echoes, than to reaſonable creatures. I converſe frequently with a row of willows, that grow on the banks of a neighbouring river, and have often called them to witneſs what they neither hear nor underſtand. The ſtreams are often ſwelled with my tears, without ever riſing to a deluge; and the rocks melted at my complaints without loſing one atom of their bulk.

But while I laugh at myſelf, I ſhall eaſily forgive you, if you ſhould take the ſame liberty, and enter into the ridicule of my character. You are a lover yourſelf of the modern jovial kind, quite the reverſe of the ſolemn antiquated form of Paſtor Fido, Don Quixote, and your humble ſervant.

All this raillery is forced, and only used in policy, that I may tell my story with a good grace to a man of your gaiety.

You know how the young Elvira was left to my father's care by her mother; and by a contract between both our parents, was, from her childhood, designed a wife for me. But neither her beauty nor vast fortune have had the least influence on me to make any addresses to her. I have conversed with her with great indifference, and thought I had reason to believe she had the same for me. But my father, in order to make good his engagements, when he was on his death-bed, desired me to promise him, with the greatest solemnity, to marry her. As he had been the best of parents, I promised him, without any reluctance, on condition Elvira did not refuse me; of which I had some secret hopes. However, as I then had no other inclination, I was in no manner of care whether she accepted or refused me.

But when I was last in town, and walking in the Mall, I met one of the most agreeable women I ever saw. She was tall, and exactly shaped; her eyes large and fine; with something soft and pensive in her air; something of thought, of wit, of significancy, which I cannot express. Whether I then met my fellow-mind, that had been pared for me by destiny; or whether in some pre-existent state we had been acquainted, I know not; but I flattered myself she observed me without contempt. I spent my time in following, or endeavouring to meet her; and at last had made myself so remarkable, that she seemed to think herself obliged to avoid me. As far as I could, without being ridiculous by my curiosity, I inquired after her; but left the walks uninformed who she was. I was in a day or two forced to go into the country; where I was detained for some months, endeavouring in vain to forget the fair stranger I had seen.

In this temper I was taking a solitary ramble from

my own ſeat, till I came to the entrance of a wood that was near the Earl of ——'s park. Here I found, ſurpriſing as a heavenly viſion, the lovely form that had charmed me, ſitting with a Milton in her hand; which ſhe was reading with ſuch attention, that I ſpoke to her before ſhe ſaw me. She immediately withdrew into the park: but I followed her, and told her, the happineſs of my life depended on her attention; which, in the moſt modeſt manner ſhe at laſt granted, and heard the ſoft relation. That little ſucceſs gave me ſuch hopes, that I purſued the affair on every opportunity I could prevail with her to give me. For, as my fortune and rank were ſuperior to her's, which was only dependent, ſhe acted with great caution; and convinced me, that ſhe poſſeſſed all that true grandeur of mind that conſcious virtue inſpires. Her wit, the elegance of her behaviour, with a thouſand graces that attended her whole conduct, ſecured her conqueſt, and confined all my hopes of earthly happineſs to the poſſeſſion of the charming maid. Nor did I fear the leaſt obſtacle to my wiſhes; for I had told her my engagement to my father, and the full certainty I had (as indeed I thought) of Elvira's refuſal; which I now went to aſk, with a perfect aſſurance that I ſhould receive it. Her coldneſs did not ſeem to have the air of affectation, but rather the effect of a ſecret averſion. I looked on myſelf to be a ſort of incumbrance entailed on her by her anceſtors, of which ſhe would be joyfully freed; and, in the gaiety of my heart, made her an offer of my perſon, ſuch as it was, without the leaſt expectation of being accepted; as I was, to my unſpeakable confuſion. She perceived my diſappointment with a modeſt, but tender concern; and put me into a diſorder that I could not eaſily recover.

I knew my love to the beautiful Almeda was a ſecret to every body but ourſelves; and if it had been known, I would do Elvira the juſtice to con-

feſs, there was a ſweetneſs in her temper, almoſt incapable of malice. However, I durſt not diſcover the affair without Almeda's conſent: to whom I went, in the height of my diſtreſs, to let her know the diſappointment. She grew pale at the relation, ſunk into my arms, and only ſpoke with tears; but ſoon left me, without letting me know her reſolution, till within a few hours I received the incloſed,

To Bellamour.

"I Beg you to forget, and never think of ſeeing
"me again; nor let any thing tempt you to vio-
"late your engagement to a dying father. It would
"be barbarous in you to abandon the fair Elvira,
"who was an orphan caſt on the protection of your
"family. Do not entertain one anxious thought
"for me: I was the care of Providence when I
"was unknown to you, and that will be my refuge
"in all future diſtreſs.——Adieu for ever.

Almeda."

I am juſt going to diſcover our mutual paſſion to Elvira, and to ſhow her this letter, in hopes that compaſſion will prevail with her to refuſe me; and cannot but flatter myſelf with ſucceſs, from the gentleneſs of her diſpoſition. I am, in all the changes of fortune,

My dear Carlos,

Sincerely yours,

Bellamour.

[*See the ſequel of this ſtory in letter* 17. *part* II.]

LETTER IX.

To Philario, from the Duke of ——. Written on his death-bed.

BEfore you receive this, my final ſtate will be determined by the Judge of all the earth: in a few days at moſt, perhaps in a few hours, the inevitable ſentence will be paſſed, that ſhall raiſe me to the heights of happineſs, or ſink me to the depths of miſery. While you read theſe lines, I ſhall be either groaning under the agonies of abſolute deſpair, or triumphing in fulneſs of joy.

It is impoſſible for me to expreſs the preſent diſpoſition of my ſoul, the vaſt uncertainty I am ſtruggling with. No words can paint the force and vivacity of my apprehenſions. Every doubt wears the face of horror; and would perfectly overwhelm me, but for ſome faint beams of hope, which dart acroſs the tremendous gloom. What tongue can utter the anguiſh of a ſoul ſuſpended between the extremes of infinite joy, or eternal miſery! I am throwing my laſt ſtake for eternity, and tremble and ſhudder for the important event.

Good God! how have I employed myſelf! what inchantment has held me! in what delirium has my life been paſſed! what have I been doing! while the ſun in its race, and the ſtars in their courſes, have lent their beams, perhaps only to light me to perdition.

I never waked till now. I have but juſt commenced the dignity of a rational being. Till this inſtant I had a wrong apprehenſion of every thing in nature: I have purſued ſhadows, entertained myſelf with dreams; I have been treaſuring up duſt, and ſporting myſelf with the wind. I look back on my paſt life; and, but for ſome memorials of infamy and guilt, it is all a blank, a perfect vacan-

cy. I might have grazed with the beasts of the field, or sung with the winged inhabitants in the woods, to much better purpose, than any for which I have lived. And oh! but for some faint hope, a thousand times more blessed had I been to have slept with the clods of the valley, and never heard the almighty *Fiat*, nor waked into life at his command!

I never had a just apprehension of the solemnity of the part I am to act, till now. I have often met death insulting on the hostile plain, and with a stupid boast defied his terrors. With a courage as brutal as that of the warlike horse, I have rushed into the battle, laughed at the glittering spear, and rejoiced at the sound of the trumpet; nor had a thought of any state beyond the grave, nor the great tribunal, to which I must have been summoned;

Where all my secret guilt had been reveal'd,
Nor the minutest circumstance conceal'd.

It is this which arms death with all its terrors; else I could still mock at fear, and smile in the face of the gloomy monarch. It is not giving up my breath, it is not being for ever insensible, is the thought at which I shrink; it is the terrible *hereafter*, the something beyond the grave at which I recoil. Those great realities, which, in the hours of mirth and vanity, I have treated as phantoms, as the idle dreams of superstitious brains; these start forth, and dare me now in their most terrible demonstration. My awakened conscience feels something of that eternal vengeance I have often defied.

To what heights of madness is it possible for human nature to reach? What extravagance is it to jest with death! to laugh at damnation! to sport with eternal chains, and recreate a jovial fancy with the scenes of infernal misery!

Were there no impiety in this kind of mirth, it

would be as ill-bred as to entertain a dying friend with the sight of an Harlequin, or the rehearsal of a farce. Every thing in nature seems to reproach this levity in human creatures. The whole creation but man is serious;——man, who has the highest reason to be so, while he has affairs of infinite consequence depending on his short uncertain duration. A condemned wretch may with as good a grace go dancing to his execution, as the greatest part of mankind go on with such a thoughtless gaiety to their graves.

Oh, my Philario, with what horror do I recall those hours of vanity we have wasted together!

Return, ye lost neglected moments! how should I prize you above the eastern treasures! Let me dwell with hermits; let me rest on the cold earth; let me converse in cottages; may I but once more stand a candidate for an immortal crown, and have my probation for celestial happiness.

Ye vain grandeurs of a court! ye sounding titles, and perishing riches! what do ye now signify? what consolation, what relief can you give me?

I have had a splendid passage to the grave. I die in state, and languish under a gilded canopy; I am expiring on soft and downy pillows, and am respectfully attended by my servants and physicians: my dependents sigh; my fifteen weep; my father bends beneath a load of years and grief: my lovely wife, pale and silent, conceals her inward anguish; my friend, the generous Pylades, who was as my own soul, suppresses his sighs, and leaves me to hide his secret grief.

But, oh! which of these will answer my summons at the high tribunal? which of them will bail me from the arrest of death? who will descend into the dark prison of the grave for me?

Here they all leave me, after having paid a few idle ceremonies to the breathless clay; which perhaps may lye reposed in state, while my soul, my only conscious part, may stand trembling before my

judge. My afflicted friends, it is very probable, with great solemnity, will lay the senseless corpse in a stately monument, inscribed with

"Here lyes the great ——"

But could the pale carcase speak, it would soon reply.

——— False marble, where?
"Nothing but poor and sordid dust lyes here.

Cowley.

While some flattering panegyric is pronounced at my interment, I may perhaps be hearing my just condemnation at a superior tribunal; where an unerring verdict may sentence me to everlasting infamy. But I cast myself on his absolute mercy, through the infinite merits of the Redeemer of lost mankind. Adieu, my dear Philario, till we meet in the world of spirits.

LETTER X.

From Celadon, to Amasia, who had seduced him into a criminal love for her.

TOO lovely Amasia! whither have you led my heedless steps; into what paths of destruction have you seduced me! I have done an action which will never bear the reflection of reason; an action that will stamp an endless stain on my character, and with which my conscience loudly reproaches me.

I have sinned against all the ties of honour and gratitude. The generous man I have wronged, was the guardian of my childhood, and the guide of my yet unexperienced youth. I am entering me to the world under his conduct and protection: he has been more than a father to me; never was a

truſt diſcharged with greater tenderneſs and fidelity. May Heaven return it in a thouſand bleſſings on his head! ——Should he ever leave an orphan like me expoſed, may it meet the ſame juſtice and humanity I have found from him. But, oh! may it never make ſuch a return! Let ſuch villainy never ſtain his noble race, nor leave a blemiſh on his name.

Theſe thoughts bring back to my memory all his gentle treatment; awake my young affections, and melt me into childiſh tears. ——O, could they waſh away my guilt, and reſtore me back to virtue!

——————————" Yet I'll look up.
" My fault is paſt. But, oh! what form of prayer
" Can ſerve my turn!" *Shakeſpeare.*

Curſe on the maxims of the world, and that impropriety of language, that would diſguiſe the baſeſt of crimes, with the names of amuſement and gallantry! Let me be ſingular, let me be unpolite, let me be unfaſhionably good, if I can but keep my peace, and juſtify myſelf to my own conſcience! Let me inviolably obſerve the rules of truth and juſtice, be fearleſs, and open to the inſpection of God, and may everlaſting reproach reſt on all the modiſh appellations and refinements that would ſoften the horror of a baſe and treacherous action!

Theſe were the principles in which the injured Altamont inſtructed me, and confirmed by his own great example. My mind had been elevated by the rehearſal of heroic actions, and a love to the public intereſt; by a philoſophic fortitude, and the command of my paſſions. Such were the motives that governed me, till the fatal day came that made you a bride to the deluded Altamont; from which unhappy period I may date my apoſtacy from virtue. You taught me ſofter maxims, and perverted the noble ardor of my ſoul, into looſe and infamous deſigns; while you careſſed me with an open freedom,

which my early years, and your husband's affection for me too easily excused.

Till then I had been a stranger to love: and, thoughtless of danger, left myself unguarded to all your charms; ignorant whether the growing passion led, nor thought the pleasure criminal which I took in your conversation. But I was soon softened into sin, and unwarily took in the deadly poison, while you indulged the guilty inclination, and soothed me into ruin.

What infernal delusion perverted your judgment when you preferred me to the man to whom you had given your vows? The vainest of all your sex might have limited her ambition with such a conquest. If the most agreeable person, the best temper, joined with unblemished equity to man, and piety to God, ever claimed esteem, he might justly challenge it from all that knew him.

But he had a right to your affection by a thousand tender engagements, and by his entire confidence in your fidelity; not from any credulity of temper, but from his own innate honour, and a soul incapable of treachery or distrust. With an artifice which only hell could teach, you have secured the esteem of a man, who in all things else acts with the greatest judgment and penetration.

It was the disguise I saw you practise, that recalled me back to truth and honour. In your crime I perceived my own guilt, and abhorred the monstrous part I had been acting. While he, my guardian, my protector, had been fatiguing himself with cares and journies, to secure me from wrongs and injustice; I, in his own house, proved a traitor to his honour, and invaded the most sacred rights of his affection.—O that he would appear to my view an enemy, a villain, any thing but a friend and benefactor! These titles confound and pierce my soul with the most exquisite torments.

The fever from which I am just recovered, was not half so threatning to my life, as the expressions

of his kindneſs; when, with the tenderneſs of a father, and the benignity of a friend, he watched my languiſhing intervals, and diſcovered the moſt affectionate concern for my life. How exquiſite was my remorſe! Nothing but the dread of eternal vengeance could have kept me from putting an end to that life for which he ſhewed ſuch an unfeigned concern.

My crime ſtood in all its aggravations before me. The ſecret ſenſe of my guilt was worſe than death or infamy: I abhorred the diſguiſe of virtue, by which I deceived him. No conſideration but his happineſs, could have reſtrained me from confeſſing my villainy, and giving myſelf up to his juſt reproaches and vengeance. I could have ſmiled on Death, and welcomed the fatal ſtroke from his hand, could that have been an expiation for my guilt.

But I had my peace to make with Heaven, and found another ſort of expiation neceſſary to ſecure me from divine vengeance; ſo that as much as I was tired with life, death was no refuge; nor could I fly to the grave as a ſanctuary. Yet, as ſoon as ever my health permits, I am fully determined to make myſelf an exile from my native country, and fly the ſight of my injured friend for ever. But,

——————Where ſhall I find refuge?
No barb'rous nation will receive a guilt
So much tranſcending theirs, but drive me out!
The wildeſt beaſts will hunt me from their dens,
And birds of prey moleſt me in the grave.

I dare not ſee you, Madam, to take a laſt farewell. You have beauty, and I am human; and, after theſe convictions, ſhould the dangerous flame again kindle, I muſt ſin away all hopes of forgiveneſs from God or man. Make what reparation you can to the beſt of huſbands, by your future conduct. It is the laſt advice you will receive from

The unhappy *Celadon*.

LETTER XI.

To my Lord ——, from a Statesman.

My Lord,

YOur commands are very obliging, in giving me an opportunity to be impertinent, by entering into a detail of my solitary amusements, in this absolute retreat from all the polite and agreeable part of society. It is well I have your gracious indulgence to talk of myself, and be the hero of my own romance: for, without vanity, I meet nothing here more considerable; nor is it without justice that I claim the privilege of personating the superior part in the drama.

Indeed I was never more sensible of my own dignity. Abstract from business or diversion, my mind retires within itself; where it finds treasures till now undiscovered, capacities formed for infinite objects, desires that stretch themselves beyond the limits of this wide creation, in search of the great Original of life and pleasure. I find new powers exerting their energy, some latent exercises, which till now I have been a stranger to. I have indeed heard from the men who teach such holy fables, (as I then thought them,) that the soul was immortal, and capable of celestial joys. But I rather wished than believed these transporting truths; and put them on a level with the poets rosy bowers, their myrtle shades, and soft Elysian fields. But now I am convinced of their evidence, and triumph in the privileges of my own being. I rejoice to think, that the moment I began to exist, I entered on an eternal state, and commenced a duration that shall run parallel to that of the supreme and self-existent Mind.

This prospect animates me with a divine ambition, and casts a reproach on all created glory. The

world vaniſhes; its charms and ſoft allurements are no more: a vail is caſt on mortal beauty, the ſpell is broken, the inchantment diſſolved.

You ſmile, I know, and take this for an imaginary triumph, a ſort of cowardly inſult, in the abſence of an enemy. You will tell me, this contempt of grandeur appears with an ill grace, in one that has the poſſeſſion of a ſplendid poſt in the government. But this, my Lord, is what has given me a juſt opinion of the world, and of myſelf. A conſtant ſeries of ſucceſs and proſperity has convinced me, that the whole creation cannot make me bleſſed. My ambitious deſigns have never been diſappointed: in love, by a ſtrange caprice of the ſex, I have been always fortunate. But whatever pleaſure I purſued, the enjoyment always undeceived or diſguſted me. Sometimes I was too wiſe, and ſometimes too capricious to be pleaſed.

Why am I not at reſt? Why cannot theſe objects ſatisfy, or at leaſt delude me with a dream of happineſs? Why muſt I ſo exactly balance the weight of evil that mingles with every good? Had I theſe reflecting powers to make me thus nicely miſerable? I am reaſoning away all the ſatisfaction of human life, and growing wiſe to deſperation. I cannot ſo much as amuſe myſelf with an airy hope. I have tried all the vanities below the ſun, and there is no novelty left to flatter me; I know the utmoſt that beauty and greatneſs can give, and am cured of love and ambition by experimental evidence.

What a paradiſe, what laſting joys, did I promiſe myſelf in the poſſeſſion of the admired Aſpaſia! The yielding beauty, by granting my deſires, loſt my eſteem; her charms vaniſhed, her wit was impertinence, and her artifice diſguſted me. This put a period to my gallantries. The women were no longer angels, but mere erring mortals; with whom I converſed on a level, without any temptation to idolatry. Balls and aſſemblies, dancing and dreſs, were no longer the ſubjects of my ſerious applica-

tion, nor the ſupreme deſign of my being. I no longer intereſted myſelf in the ſucceſs of any modiſh entertainment. With great moderation I heard the grand controverſy, Who ſung beſt, Cuzzoni or Faustina? and I left the important truth to be decided by more capable judges. I yielded an implicit aſſent to every well dreſſed critic, who affirmed Mrs ——— was the beſt actreſs of Polly in the Beggar's Opera; and never betrayed any intemperate zeal, or breach of charity, againſt thoſe who diſſented. I knew every beau and fine lady in Great Britain had a right to judge for themſelves; and that being too poſitive, might endanger the public peace.

But theſe ſoft follies were only diſcarded for more ſpecious vanities. Diſtinction and power, titles and equipage, now employed my thoughts; ambition took full poſſeſſion of my ſoul.—I reached the envied height, and made myſelf gloriouſly miſerable. The period from whence I reſolved to date my happineſs, began with diſtruſt and anxiety. Inſtead of friends, I found myſelf ſurrounded with flatterers, and mercenary dependents. Impatient and fatigued with the crowd, I ſometimes withdrew to my apartment, and, in ſolitary grandeur, tried what joys the contemplation on my quality and titles could give ——— "*The Moſt Noble!*——*The Right Ho-*"*nourable!* ——— Ye potent words! (I cried,) "where is your energy? ——— Ye mighty ſounds, "that once fired my ſoul! where is your accuſtom-"ed force? Have ye no pleaſing magic to ſtill the "tempeſt within? ——— Ye boaſted names of truſt "and power! why can ye no longer recreate my "ſpirits, nor ſolace my moments of leiſure and re-"tirement? Is there nothing in the glittering coro-"net, this popular toy, to divert me? While I am "ſurrounded with the pageantries of ſtate, and ſee "ſo many badges of my own dignity, why does "not my mind elate itſelf, and brighten into ecſta-"cy?" One would think it impoſſible to be ſplene-

tic, with those fine panegyrics, and elegant dedications lying before me. Here I find myself a hero, a wit, a handsome man, a virtuoso; and, to sum up all, an universal blessing to mankind. This darling theme, this catalogue of my own good qualities, one would imagine, should gladden my heart, and give me some vivacity; and yet really, my Lord, as agreeable as the subject of my own merit is, it would hardly have kept me awake, if the vexations of state had not done it.

My late indisposition has given me a just excuse to withdraw from public affairs. I have found a romantic retreat, surrounded with a charming variety of woods, open lawns, and flowery vales, in their uncultivated beauty. Here I rove unattended and free, with no circumstance of grandeur, but the consciousness of a reasonable and immortal being. I have the joy to find I can stand on my own legs, and move from place to place with a spontaneous motion, without the assistance of a painted machine, the prudence of my coachman, and the vigour of my horses.

I have tried what delights were to be found in madness and folly, and am now in pursuit of what wisdom and philosophy can yield. In the fair creation I trace an Almighty Power, and see the immense Divinity impressed on all his works. Inspired with a charming enthusiasm, I address the great Spirit of nature, in these soliloquies:

"Ye woods and wilds, receive me to your shade!
"These still retreats my contemplation aid:
"From mortals flying to your chaste abode,
"Let me attend th' instructive voice of God!
"He speaks in all, and is in all things found:
"I hear him, I perceive him all around:
"In Nature's lovely and unblemish'd face,
"With joy his sacred lineaments I trace.
"O glorious Being! O supremely fair!
"How free, how perfect thy productions are!

"Forgive me, while with curious eyes I view
"Thy works, and boldly thus thy steps pursue.
"The silent valley, and the lonely grove
"I haunt; but oh! 'tis thee I seek and love.
"'Tis not the chant of birds, nor whisp'ring breeze,
"But thy soft voice I seek among the trees,
"Invoking thee, by silver streams I walk,
"To thee in solitary shades I talk.
"I speak thy dear lov'd name, nor speak in vain;
"Kind echoes long the pleasing sound retain.
"Reviving sweets the op'ning flowers disclose,
"Fragrant the violet, and the budding rose;
"But all their balmy sweets from thee they steal,
"And something of thee to my sense reveal.
"Fair look the stars, and fair the morning-ray,
"When first the fields their painted scenes display;
"Glorious the sun in his meridian height!
"And yet, compar'd to thee, how faint the light!
"Ador'd Artificer! what skill divine!
"What wonders in the wide creation shine!
"Order and majesty adorn the whole,
"Beauty and life, and thou th' inspiring soul.
"Whatever grace or harmony's express'd
"On all thy works, the God is there confess'd.
"But oh! from all thy works, how small a part,
"To human minds, is known of what thou art!
"Fancy gives o'er its flight in search of thee;
"Our thoughts are lost in thy immensity."

The thoughts are my own; but I am modest enough to confess the cadence and rhyme are borrowed; and, as you are a patron of the muses, I believed the harmony would please you. But you are certainly overjoyed to find the rapture is finished; and that, after this elevation, I am composed enough to subscribe myself,

Your Lordship's
Most devoted
humble servant,
Philander.

LETTER XII.

To Myrtillo, from a physician, giving him an account of his falling in love with a fair stranger.

My dear Myrtillo,

THE engagement I am under to attend the Earl of ——— in his illness, will detain me longer in the country than I designed; nor is this the only motive that has kept me here.

I can conceal nothing of importance, without a breach of that confidence I have in you; nor can I deny myself the pleasure of telling the tender story of my care.

You will be surprised that the person who conversed in the Mall, the Play house, and Opera, with such indifference, should turn lover in the country. But it is a serious truth, and will not admit of raillery. All my earthly happiness is in suspence, and depends on the success of this passion.

Nor will you censure me, when I tell you, that my conqueror is the lovely stranger that appeared in public last winter with the Dutchess of ———. I did not see her then; and if I had, business or diversion might have guarded me from the soft surprise; but all nature, every alluring circumstance, conspired here to vanish and inchant me.

The evening was fair, and with Mr Thomson's excellent poem on Summer in my hand, I took a walk, and read by intervals, till all my soul was composed and harmonious.

"These are the haunts of meditation, these
"The scenes where ancient bards th' inspiring breath
"Ecstatic felt; and from the world retir'd
"Convers'd with angels, and immortal forms,
"On heav'nly errand bent—to save the fall
"Of virtue struggling on the brink of vice,

'To hint pure thoughts, and warn the favour'd soul
" For future trials fated to prepare."

In this visionary temper I had wandered about a mile from the Earl of ——'s gardens and park, till I entered a winding valley, green and flowery as the Elysian fields. A silver stream ran murmuring along the middle, and willows in equal order adorned the banks. It was not perfect nature; something of art appeared, but in the most agreeable negligence. There were many little mossy seats raised along the sides of the river; but what pleased me most was a grotto, which looked like the retirement of some sylvan deity. I entered, and lost myself in a pleasing contemplation, till the sight of the most charming object I ever beheld surprised me. She seemed

" Fairer than fam'd of old, or fabled since
" Of fairy damsels, met in forest wide
" By errant knights."——

Milton.

Her shape and features were perfectly regular; her complexion clear as the light.——But I might as well paint virtue or harmony, as describe the graces of her mein and aspect; in which there was nothing of that gay and thoughtless vivacity that most of her sex think so becoming; but something so serious and composed, something that expressed a mind within conscious of its own dignity and heavenly original. She advanced till she came near the arbour that concealed me; and then, seating herself on the bank of the river, in a pensive posture, leaning her cheek on her hand, white as the new-fallen snow, with a soft and graceful accent, she repeated the following lines out of Sir Richard Blackmore's fine poem on the creation.

" Thy force alone, Religion, death disarms,
" Breaks all his darts, and every viper charms.

" Soften'd by thee, the grisly form appears
" No more the horrid object of our fears.
" We undismay'd this awful pow'r obey,
" That guides us thro' the safe, tho' gloomy way,
" Which leads to life."

I heard her with a very tender concern; because there appeared something in her complexion too delicate for a state of confirmed health, which was perhaps what led her to such a serious thought. While she was going on, a spruce footman came to tell her supper was ready, and her father waited for her. She rose immediately, and followed the man at some distance. When they were gone, my curiosity ventured some paces forward; and, at the end of the walk, I perceived a pretty romantic pile of building, where she entered. But the evening grew dusky, and I hastened back to the Earl's seat; and, retiring to my apartment, passed my time in writing this adventure, of which you shall hear the sequel in my next.

But I am grown a lover in one fatal moment; and, in this deplorable circumstance, am

Your most humble servant,

Leander.

LETTER XIII.

To the same, relating the death of his mistress.

MY last informed you in what a serious passion I was engaged; but the tragedy is now finished, and I am past the possibility of being happy in this world.

A few days after my last adventure, there came a messenger from a neighbouring gentleman, for me to attend one of the family who was ill. I followed the servant, and found to my surprise, it was

the house where all my hopes were confined. I was immediately conducted to the apartment of my patient, who proved the lovely woman I had seen in my last ramble. She was sitting in a chair, pale and negligent, but perfectly graceful in the height of her disorder.

No words can express my grief, when I found the symptoms of her distemper fatal. Indeed the distraction of my mind was so remarkable, that she could not but observe it; and, perceiving her own danger in my concern, she asked me without the least emotion, "If I was surprised to find her mortal?" but she desired me, "since it was a truth "of which she was entirely convinced, to speak my "opinion without the least flattery or caution."

This true greatness of mind confirmed my esteem, and heightened my concern for her life. But I was in the last exigence what to reply. I durst not flatter her in the common strain of my profession; nor could I imitate that insensibility which the young heroine acted, in an event on which the future happiness of my life depended.

I was ashamed to weep; but, while sorrow kept me silent, the dying beauty told me, some intervals of disorder she lately felt, had made the darkness of the grave, and the solemnity of a death bed, familiar scenes to her imagination. "Waiting for "my last hour (added she) without consternation, "I find this mortal structure sinking into the dust; "but methinks I find the nobler powers of my soul "kindling into life and immortality."

What are the laurels and trophies of conquerors compared to this scene of triumph! which now I could have envied. But my charming patient desired she might try to rest; and I retired, resolving not to go from the house till I was the event. She lay as if she slept till the morning; when I was hastily called, and found her past all hopes, but of a few hours life. Her smiles were perfect, and a sort of languishing beauty adorned her face, charming beyond all the vivacity of health.

These were some of her last words, uttered with a faint but pleasing accent, the sound of which I shall never forget.

"O Death! how hast thou disguised thy terrors, "and put on an angel's form to approach me! "What welcome, what transporting tidings hast "thou brought me! I come, thou kind messenger "of my liberty and happiness; I obey thy gentle "invitation.

"When shall the curtain fall, and these bless'd eyes "Meet all the dazzling wonders of the skies?
"Oh, rend the hated vail, and take away
"The dull partition of this brittle clay!
"Come, heav'nly day, which ne'er shall see a cloud!
"Come, cheering smiles, from the bright face of God.

"I see, methinks, the glimmering of celestial "light, and bless the dawning of everlasting day. "The shadows are flying, and the heavens opening "their inmost glories before me. In a few moments "I shall enter the blissful habitations, the dazzling "recesses of the Most High; whom I shall be-"hold in full perfection, exalted in majesty, and "complete in beauty. My hopes are unbounded. "I set no limits to my expectations; for in his pre-"sence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are "pleasures for evermore.

"With these transporting scenes before me, what "glorious mortal could excite my envy? What "scene of pleasure could the whole creation display "to tempt me back? The dark dominions of death "which I am passing through, not a captive, but a "conqueror, through the strength of my victorious "Redeemer, who has led in triumph all the pow-"ers of darkness. Millions of ages of happiness "are before me; the prospect stretches to an un-"measurable length; my soul presses forward, and "calls eternity itself her own."

At these words, closing her eyes, with a smile she resigned her breath, and left me,

Your most unhappy friend,

Leander.

LETTER XIV.

From Myrtilla to Hermione, giving an account of the fatal event of her brother's passion for her.

My dear Hermione,

I Hope my last letter prepared you for the melancholy tidings which this brings you of my brother's death. I know the relation will heighten your grief, and renew my own sorrow; but reason signifies nothing, and proves but an empty name, in the transport of such a tender passion as now possesses all my soul.

After the fatal time that my father had extorted a promise from my brother, and charged him on his blessing never to see you more, I perceived an alteration in the gaiety of his temper, with a visible decay of his health; but I could hardly persuade myself love was the cause, imagining the soft passion, in a youth of eighteen, was easily diverted from one fair object to another.

I was confirmed in this by his obliging and submissive behaviour to my father, whose conduct in this affair was indeed arbitrary and severe; nor could I forbear making some secret reproaches on such a rigorous imposition, where there could be no objection made but to your fortune.

However, filial affection was certainly my brother's governing principle; and he still found some plausible excuses for that severe command, which cut off the brightest hopes he had of any earthly happiness. His piety always silenced my resentments,

and pleaded my father's abſolute right to diſpoſe of him.

But as much as he endeavoured to diſguiſe his paſſion from me, the incloſed will convince you of the inward anguiſh of his mind, which he gave me the day before he died, and charged me not to read it till his eyes were cloſed in death.

My father, in the utmoſt diſtreſs, looked on the expiring youth; but durſt not examine into a ſecret, which would have given him the extremeſt regret to diſcover. My brother perceived his concern, and gave him all the conſolation he could, by owning his paternal care of his principles and actions; and returned him the moſt pathetic acknowledgments, for the reſtraint his authority had put on ſome of his youthful follies. My father obſerved the kind intention of this diſcourſe, which ſtill added to the anguiſh of his ſoul.

"Be ſatisfied, my dear father, (ſaid the dying "youth,) be ſatisfied with the determination of "Heaven. I might have dragged out a long inglo-"rious life, loaded with infamy and guilt."

Then, taking me by the hand, with a heavenly ſmile on his face, he ſaid, "Adieu, my dear ſiſter; "I am rather falling into a gentle ſleep than dying. "I feel no pain, and all within is peaceful and calm." And then cloſing his eyes, with a ſoft voice he repeated theſe words, and with them reſigned his breath.

The angels call, they call me from above,
And bid me haſten to the realms of love.
My ſoul with tranſport hears the happy doom;
I come, ye gentle meſſengers, I come:
Earth flies with all the charms it has in ſtore,
Its ſnares and gay temptations are no more.
While heav'n appears, and the propitious ſkies
Unveil'd their inmoſt glories to my eyes,
To mortals and their hopes I bid adieu,
And aſk no more the riſing ſun to view:

For oh! the light himself, with rays divine,
Breaks in, and God's eternal day is mine.

After this moving story, whether I ought in prudence to let you see the incloſed, I cannot determine; but it is not in my power to keep it a ſecret from my moſt faithful friend. It will ſhew my brother's height of virtue, in commanding a paſſion ſo tender and fatal.

I am unalterably yours,

Myrtilla.

This is the letter he gave me ſealed the day before he died, with a charge not to open it till after he was dead.

To Myrtilla.

"*My dear ſiſter,*

"WHatever care I have taken hitherto to conceal my folly, I now confeſs it, that the fatal effect may warn you from giving up yourſelf to the government of an immoderate paſſion. It was this that haſtened my early deſtiny, and cut off all the noble ends of life.

"My love to the beautiful Hermione was ſuch an inchantment, that all the motives of reaſon and religion could not free me from it. The improvements of art and nature, the love of my country and the public welfare, had no ſhare in my thoughts. My piety was enervated, and the important end of my being neglected. I lived and moved, and acted with no other deſign, but to pleaſe the caprice of my fair tyrant:

"Till my father, with the higheſt reaſon, endeavoured to reſcue me from the inglorious ſlavery. I was convinced of the kindneſs of his intention, and how much he conſulted my honour and advantage, in putting me under a ſolemn

" obligation, never to see the object of my dotage
" more.

" With the utmost violence to my tender inclination I kept my promise, and fell a victim to
" the ties of filial piety and truth. What regard I
" paid to those sacred names, Heaven was my witness, and how sincerely I strove to conquer the
" unhappy passion that possessed me. Aided by a
" power divine, I at last recovered my reason; but
" my health hourly declined, and death is now advancing to release me from all the remainders of
" error and folly. The soft affections of my soul
" will be perfectly refined into a noble and seraphic
" ardour. I am going to the fruition of immortal
" beauty, and unmingled pleasure; I shall gaze on
" the bright Original of all that is excellent and
" lovely; I shall hear the voice of uncreated harmony, speaking peace and unutterable ecstasy to
" my soul.

" Adieu, my dear Myrtilla, my much loved sister! May angels watch your steps, and keep you
" in the paths of virtue! Make it your study to
" soften my father's cares, and add no sorrow to his
" hoary age. I fear he will carry his grief for me
" to the grave; but oh! let him never know the
" excess of my folly. I charge you not to show
" him a word of this letter, nor once reflect on his
" well-meant severity. Farewell till we meet in the
" blissful realms of love."

LETTER XV.

To Mr ———

SIR,

THE instances of Heathen virtue that you have collected, have something in them, I confess, noble and surprising; and your eloquence has set

them in their full luſtre and magnitude. But there is a name, the Chriſtian boaſt and hope, that darkens all human glory; and which, with a ſort of pious inſult, may be oppoſed to the moſt accompliſhed of your heroes.

The poem I have incloſed on this lofty ſubject, is a paraphraſe on Mr Crawſhaw's *hymn to the name of* JESUS; and there is little alteration of any thing but the language.

A Hymn to the name of JESUS.

AWake, my ſoul! my glory, riſe and ſing!
Awake, and all thy ſacred ardour bring!
While for unuſual flight I ſpread a tow'ring wing:
Awake, my lute! proud of the glorious theme,
Let each harmonious ſtring
Tremble with rapt'rous joy, and ſpeak the mighty name!
Aſſiſt me, ev'ry gentle ſound,
Which ſtudious art has found;
You that ſpeak with ſilver ſtrings,
Or ſwell with tuneful breath,
And lend the coward wings,
To meet the face of death:
You that in the rural ſtrain,
Echo through the peaceful plain,
Delight the groves and charm the guiltleſs ſwain;
With you that various joys afford,
Touch'd by a ſkilful hand,
Which can the pow'rs of harmony command,
And dance with graceful art along the tuneful chord:
You that with vocal muſic pleaſe the ear,
Your choiceſt ſtrains prepare;
The ſprings which move our inmoſt thoughts you know,
And can their fierceſt rage controul,
While from your lips torrents of pleaſures flow,
And overwhelm the ſoul.

Let all that nature calls, or ſweet,
In the glorious concert meet!
Purling ſtreams and falling floods,
Sighing winds, and whiſpering woods!
Let ev'ry bird of tuneful throat
Join his free ungovern'd note;
While hills and valleys catch the ſacred ſtrain,
And everlaſting echoes the bleſs'd ſound retain!
With *Jeſus* we begin: his charming name
Shall fill the ſpacious ſong,
And yield an endleſs theme;
To ev'ry note the joyful word we'll place;
Our ſoft preludiums this alone ſhall grace,
And ev'ry cadence artfully prolong.
New ſmiles already nature wears,
All blooming looks and gay;
The brighten'd ſun crown'd with freſh beams appears,
And darts a clearer ray.
Tranſporting name!
Whoſe accents to the ranſom'd would proclaim
Salvation and immeaſurable grace,
Peace and good-will to all the human race;
A purchas'd heav'n, an open'd paradiſe,
Unbounded joys, and never-ending bliſs.
Stupendous love!
Can man for this ungrateful prove?
Jeſus, the Saviour! what rebellious knee
Would not a ready homage pay to thee?
The Martyrs glorious train,
Thy noble votaries of old,
In records of immortal fame inroll'd,
Wore on their breaſt inſcribed, thy mighty name.
By this, with ſacred fortitude inſpir'd,
With heav'nly zeal and tranſport fir'd,
They ran upon the pointed ſpear,
And leap'd into the flame:
Nor death could in a ſhape appear,
But what with open arms they met,
Deſpiſing all that rage could do, or proudeſt tyrants threat.

Not hell itself their constancy could shake;
Its deepest stratagems they brake,
Its wildest fury trampled down,
And seiz'd with conq'ring hands the everlasting crown.

Jesus the signal for the fight they chose,
And gave a glorious onset to their foes.
In vain the pow'rs of earth and hell oppose.
"*Jesus*, our conquering chief!" they cry'd;
Jesus! aloud the sounding skies reply'd.
Exalted name!
From thee the burning seraphs catch their flame,
Jesus the God! 'tis they alone can tell,
What treasures in that title dwell.
You happy spirits that feel its emphasis,
By this you stand confirm'd in bliss,
And know what boundless joys are stor'd
In this important word.
The glorious subject only suits
The high-strain'd notes of your immortal lutes.
Then join the choir,
You bright musicians of the skies,
And with a well-proportion'd fire
Instruct us how to rise.
Let your blest harps th' imperfect lay prolong,
Complete the bold design, and close the advent'rous song.

LETTER XVI.

Lady Jane Gray to Lord Guilford Dudley.

With anguish that no force of words can tell,
In these sad lines I take my last farewell.
Could I with less reluctance part from thee,
Approaching death had no surprise for me:
That solemn prospect should my thoughts employ,
And banish ev'ry tender scene of joy.

But thou doſt ſtill return upon my ſoul;
What force the ſoft temptation can controul?
I meet thee ſtill reſiſtleſs in thy charms,
Sigh on thy breaſt and languiſh in thy arms.
Oh, Guilford! 'tis no wretched love of life,
That fills my thoughts with this uneaſy ſtrife,
The flatt'ring blandiſhments of youthful years,
A promis'd kingdom, nor my country's tears.
For thee alone I'd live, for thee alone
I took the fatal proffer of a crown.
No fond ambition ſtain'd my guiltleſs mind,
Inſpir'd with paſſions of a gentler kind.
With thee I would have choſe ſome calm retreat,
Far from the dull formalities of ſtate.
How careleſs, how ſerene my fleeting hours
Had paſs'd in ſhady walks, and fragrant bow'rs!
Pleas'd with the murmurs of a ſmooth caſcade,
Or near ſome cryſtal fountain, while it play'd,
Upon its flow'ry verge, with thee reclin'd,
My voice I to the melting lute had join'd,
And ſoothe thy ſoul with gentle ſtrains of love,
Anſwer'd by all the muſic of the grove.
Where rove my thoughts!——Aſſiſt me, grace divine!
This laſt, this darling object, to reſign!
Forgive this frailty of my tender years,
This guilty fondneſs, and theſe female tears.
Yet Heav'n my witneſs ſtands, I would not buy
Ev'n Guilford's life, with one inglorious lie;
Nor dare my tongue, for all theſe ample ſkies
Contain, the form of ſacred truth diſguiſe.
Be Rome, be hell, in their revengful pride,
Their flames, their racks, and tort'ring arts defy'd!
A thouſand glorious witneſſes have ſtood
For this great cauſe, and ſeal'd it with their blood.
Thou conq'ring leader of a ſhining train
Of martyrs, for thy teſtimony ſlain!
In thy victorious name I dare engage
The utmoſt force of perſecuting rage.
To men, to angels, be my ſoul unveil'd,
Nor any part of heavenly truth conceal'd!

The glorious cauſe that animates my breaſt,
My lips with holy triumph ſhall atteſt;
Atteſt it with my laſt expiring breath,
And ſmile in all the ſolemn pomp of death.

But darker ſcenes before my fancy riſe,
And nature, vanquiſh'd, ſinks in the ſurpriſe.
To ſhake my utmoſt virtue 'tis decreed,
That thou to Rome muſt firſt a victim bleed.
How ſhall thy wretched wife that ſtroke ſurvive!
An hour beyond will be an age to live.
But, Guilford, keep thy ſacred truth unſtain'd,
And half my immortality is gain'd.

Ye virgin-ſaints, that, in your early bloom,
From cruel tyrants met a fatal doom;
That dy'd the honour of the Chriſtian faith,
And boldly trode the ſame illuſtrious path!
To animate the youthful ſuff'rer's breaſt,
Appear in all your heav'nly glories dreſt;
Shew him your ſparkling crowns, the bright reward
For ſuch diſtinguiſh'd conſtancy prepar'd;
Open your roſy bow'rs, ye bliſsful ſeats,
Your gardens of delight, and ſoft retreats,
Where gentle gales ambroſial odours blow,
And ſprings of joy in endleſs currents flow;
With ſmiling viſions recreate his ſoul,
And ev'ry doubting anxious thought controul.

LETTER XVII.

Lord Guilford Dudley to Lady Jane Gray.

MAY ev'ry watchful angel guard thy life,
My lovely princeſs and my charming wife!
For thee I importune the ſkies with pray'rs,
And waſte the tedious hours with gloomy cares.
Were I from all the world but thee confin'd,
I'd call my ſtars propitious ſtill, and kind;
Theſe priſon-walls would prove a ſafe retreat,
From all the reſtleſs factions of the great.

Sink, curs'd ambition, to thy native hell!
And with thy kindred fiends for ever dwell!
Were I, my fair, again poſſeſs'd of thee,
What toys were kingdoms, and their crowns, to me!
Inglorious in ſome bliſsful ſhades I'd prove
The ſilent joys of unmoleſted love.
Why was thy birth deriv'd from ancient kings?
Our miſ'ry from this fatal greatneſs ſprings.
Indulgent love a gentler lot deſign'd,
Nor form'd for public cares thy guiltleſs mind;
Thy thoughts were all employ'd on ſofter themes
Tender and innocent as infants dreams:
And yet—But Heaven the title diſallows,
A crown, methought, look'd glorious on thy brows.
In ev'ry look, in all thy graceful mien,
The brighteſt rays of majeſty were ſeen;
Imperial beauty ſparkled in thy eyes;
I gaz'd with ecſtaſy, and new ſurpriſe;
A thouſand times I preſs'd thy lovely hand,
And cry'd, *'Twas form'd a ſceptre to command.*
But theſe gay ſcenes for ever take their flight,
Like ſome fantaſtic viſion of the night.
Oh! could my death the angry queen appeaſe,
Could that alone the raging faction pleaſe;
Unterrify'd I'd meet the public ſtorm,
And challenge death in ev'ry dreadful form.
But, oh! what horrors riſe!—thy tender life!—
What would I ſpeak? my lov'd, my beauteous wife!
What counſel can thy wretched huſband give?
On any terms I fain would have thee live.
Forgive my ſtagg'ring faith, my coward heart:
My better thoughts diſclaim this ſhameful part.
What courſe can my diſtracting paſſions take,
When thou, when truth, when heav'n itſelf's at ſtake?
To endleſs darkneſs would I drag thee down,
And poorly rob thee of a martyr's crown.
May Heav'n forbid! I'll be thy joyful guide,
Nor ſhall the fatal ſtroke our ſouls divide.
O Death! where is thy boaſted conqueſt now?
Where are the frowns and terrors of thy brow?

Thou haſt an angel's heav'nly form and air;
Pleaſures and graces in thy train appear.
Ten thouſand kind tranſporting ſcenes ariſe;
Oh, come, my fair! they call us to the ſkies.
Beauties, like thee, in Nature's early pride,
Undaunted, for their ſacred faith have dy'd;
With their's, with all th' illuſtrious names of old,
The Britiſh glory, thine ſhall be inroll'd.

LETTER XVIII.

To Mrs———

Madam,

I Cannot ſay you have turned me into an angel; I have too much modeſty to compliment you or myſelf with ſuch miracles: but you have certainly given an elevation to my mind which I never before experienced. And, without any deſign but doing you juſtice, I may own, that, from a ſavage, I am become human: and, from a libertine, regular and conſiſtent! from a lover, you have metamorphoſed me into a reaſonable creature. However odd this confeſſion appears, this is making you a greater compliment than ſwearing you have made me a lunatic, and a madman. It is more glorious for you to be valued by a man in his right ſenſes, than to be ſtared at by one quite out of his wits. My being more reaſonable, does not argue that you are leſs amiable:

" For inward greatneſs, unaffected wiſdom,
" And ſanctity of manners, improve your charms."
Addiſon.

You have convinced me that virtue is more than an empty name, that it is the moſt ſacred reality. I ſee, I acknowledge the bright divinity. She inſults my infidelity by a thouſand modern inſtances of her power. Among the youthful and mature, the gentle

and ſevere, ſhe boaſts her votaries. Virtue retires no more to cottages and cells; but ſecure of public triumph and applauſe, ſhe makes the Britiſh court her imperial reſidence.

The goddeſs all her glorious ſelf appears,
When Carolina's royal form ſhe wears:
With ev'ry conqu'ring charm ſhe ſtands reveal'd,
While ſubject-hearts their glad allegiance yield.

Long may this propitious queen be the joy and boaſt of a great and happy nation! You find I am grown public ſpirited. It is you that hath given this generous ardour to my ſoul, and kindled the ſincereſt zeal for the honour of my king and country. I grow impatient to draw my ſword in their defence, and would commence the hero. Nor will I diſſemble the truth, but freely own to you, that in my ſtate of infidelity, my bravery was all affected, and often diſguiſed the moſt ſlavish terrors.

I perceive, Madam, it is my own panegyric I am writing rather than yours. Indeed my character cannot be in better hands. I have certainly done myſelf juſtice, and been punctual in the recital of my good qualities; and, with great modeſty, have thought fit to propoſe myſelf as an example of the reformation of manners.

You will conclude I am in a diſpoſition to write a a moral eſſay, rather than a love letter; which was really my prime intention: but you have ridiculed all my figures of rhetoric on that ſubject, ſo that I am forced to change my ſtyle, in my own defence. But I hope I am intelligible, in aſſuring you I am, without reſerve,

Madam,

Your moſt devoted

and moſt humble ſervant,

Albanus.

LETTERS

TO

CLEORA.

LETTER I.

Madam,

IT is certainly better for yourſelf, and more for the ſecurity of mankind, that you ſhould live in ſome rural abode, than appear in the world. Such perſons as you are fatal to the public tranquillity, and do miſchief without ever deſigning it. But I muſt own, when belles and beaus retire to country ſhades for the ſake of heavenly contemplation, the world will be well reformed. A hermit's life might be tolerable, while the ſerious hours are divided between Hyde-park and the Opera; but a more diſtant retreat in the full pride of your charms and youth, would be very extraordinary. To be convinced, by ſo early experience, that mankind are amuſed only with dreams and fantaſtic appearances, muſt proceed from a ſuperior degree of virtue and good ſenſe. After a thouſand convictions of the vanity of their purſuits, how few know the emphaſis of theſe few lines!

" Sweet ſolitude! when life's gay hours are paſt,
" Howe'er we range, in thee we fix at laſt;
" Toſs'd thro' tempeſtuous ſeas, (the voyage o'er,)
" Pale we look back, and bleſs the friendly ſhore.

" Our own ſtrict judges, our paſt life we ſcan,
" And aſk, if virtue has enlarg'd the ſpan.
" If bright the proſpect, we the grave defy,
" Truſt future ages, and contented die.

Tickell.

Nothing is, perhaps, more terrible to the imagination than abſolute ſolitude: yet I muſt own ſuch a retreat as diſengages the mind from thoſe intereſts and paſſions which mankind generally purſue, appears to me the moſt certain way to happineſs. Quietly to withdraw from the crowd, and leave the gay and ambitious to divide the honours and pleaſures of the world, without being a rival or competitor in any of theſe advantages, muſt leave a perſon in perfect and unenvied repoſe.

Without any apology, I am going to talk to myſelf; and what follows may be properly called a digreſſion.

Let me loſe the remembrance of this buſy world, and hear no more of its diſtracting tumults! Ye vain grandeurs of the earth; ye periſhing riches, and fantaſtic pleaſures! what are your proudeſt boaſts? Can you yield undecaying delights, joys becoming the dignity of reaſon, and the capacities of an immortal mind? Aſk the happy ſpirits above, at what price they value their enjoyments? aſk them, if the whole creation ſhould purchaſe one moment's interval of their bliſs? No;—one beam of celeſtial light obſcures the glory, and caſts a reproach on all the beauty this world can boaſt.

This is talking in buſkins you will think. And, indeed, I may reſign crowns and ſceptres, and give up the grandeurs of the world, with as much imaginary triumph, as a hero might fight battles, and conquer armies, in a dream.

In the height of this romantic inſult, I am,

Madam,

Your moſt obliged
humble ſervant.

LETTER II.

Madam,

I Am certainly dead and buried, according to your notions of life; interred in the silence and obscurity of a country-retreat, far from the dear town, and all its joys; which in your gay apprehensions, cannot properly be called living. But for me, (who ask nothing but ease and liberty, in order to be happy,) I am willing to inform you, I am in a state of existence, and capable of the entertainment your wit would have given me, if you had been so obliging as to have filled the blank paper you sent. Nothing could be more nicely malicious; nor is it possible for you to imagine how the sight of so much clean paper tormented me. How many sparkling things could you have writ, and not exhausted your stock, nor got the vapours by over-studying yourself! But I hope you will make me some reparation by the length of your next. I will not insist on your writing sense or reason, if that will be any privilege to you. But though nonsense from you would be a great novelty, it would cost you so much pains to write it, that I am afraid you would send me a shorter epistle than your last. I am,

Madam,

Your most obedient, &c.

LETTER III.

Madam,

I Have neglected writing so long, that I am almost ashamed to own I am still alive. I ought to have died in pure civility, which would have been the

only sufficient excuse for my silence. But really, Madam, it cost me more pains to endite an epistle to you than it would to write a book to many [illegible] readers; and I cannot help wishing I had more wit, or you a great deal less.

Your prohibition of Limpat paper will drive me to great extremities; and, what I most fear, will often prove a severe exercise to the patience of my gentle reader. I am reduced to a necessity of talking of this world, or the next. For the *last*, you are so happy at present, that you may not be always disposed to think of so solemn a subject; and for *this*, I am entirely ignorant. My conversation is confined to whispering trees, and murmuring brooks; and I cannot give you the least intelligence of what passes among mortals.

My fate, Madam, is just the reverse of yours. You had a great many things in your head, but wanted paper: I have clean paper enough, but no thing at all in my head: it is a *vacuum*, a dismal emptiness; and unless I fill the blank paper with the curious flourish of a true lover's knot, I must submit.

Madam,

Your most obliged

humble servant.

LETTER IV.

Madam,

THE Sylvan scenes never appeared more beautiful, (not even in Mr Pope's pastorals,) than in those fine lines you inclosed. I hope you will find all the joys that peace and innocence can give in your charming retreat. Your discription has led my imagination through a thousand enchanting scenes. I wish you may long enjoy those fine walks you are

contriving; not that I wish you may see as many returning springs as the fair damsels before the deluge; when an insulting beauty might take fifty years deliberation to answer a *billet doux*, and act the tyrant five hundred years in the full pride of her charms. But you shew no ambition at all of full nature; and I am persuaded it is no manner of mortification to you, that your conquests are limited to a shorter date.

I am going, Madam, to put you in mind again that you are mortal. I fancy you open my letters with as much gravity as you would a funeral sermon, and read them with the same seriousness. But you seem pleased with these subjects; and, amidst the brightest advantages of youth and fortune, are a reasonable creature, as well as a fine lady. These sort of reflections from me are not the vapours; I am pretty free from the spleen, as you know all half-witted people are. But, in the gayest disposition, Death would have a dismal view, and wear ten thousand horrors, if an immortality beyond it did not brighten the scene.

Without this prospect it would not be worth the while to begin a generous friendship. When we have seen a few more setting suns, (for rising suns some people never see,) when a few more flying hours are past, with life to resign the most exalted of human satisfactions, would heighten all the horrors of the grave.

I might, with less trouble, recommend some good book to your perusal, and keep this divinity for my own use. You will be overjoyed that I am come to a conclusion; and am,

Madam,

Tooth Dr.

LETTER V.

Madam,

YOUR reflections on ——— is death, have something in them so just and agreeable, that I am recompensed for his loss, whatever damage the rest of the world suffers by it.

It pleases me to find you so often returning to a subject that most people take so much pains to avoid. If immortality is the pride and happiness of human nature, why should it not be mentioned with the same gaiety with which we talk of other agreeable things? The other world is at least a greater novelty than this; nor is it such a glorious round of action, to eat, to drink, and sleep, that people should have an aversion to think, if not to try, what variety of enjoyments a future life will give them. But to forget this, is the design of all the thoughtless amusements the wit of man can invent. What Monsieur Pascal says is perfectly just.

"L'origine de toutes les occupations tumultuaires des hommes, et de tout ce qu'on appelle divertissement ou passe-tems, n'est en effet que d'y laisser passer le tems sans le sentir, ou le plutot sans le sentir soi-meme, et d'eviter en perdant cette partie de la vie le degout interieur. L'ame est jettee dans le corps pour y faire un cejour de peu de duree. Elle sait que ce n'est qu'un passage a un voyage eternel, et qu'elle n'a que le peu de tems que dure la vie pour s'y preparer. Mais ce peu l'incommode si fort, et l'embarrasse si etrangement, qu'elle ne songe qu'a le perdre. Ce lui est une peine insupportable a vivre et de penser a soi. Ainsi tout son soin est de s'oublier soi-meme, et de laisser couler le tems si court et si precieux sans reflexion, en s'occupant des choses qui l'empechent d'y penser."*

* This is the ground of all the tumultuary business, or

I will stop here, or you will certainly think I am going to transcribe the whole book, to save you the trouble of throwing away your money on a *moral essay*: and perhaps, Madam, you may not be in so grave a humour as when you wrote last; for all human things are changeable, and have sometimes good, and sometimes evil dispositions; and in what circumstance this will find you, is an uncertainty to,

Madam,

Your most obedient,

and most humble servant.

LETTER VI.

Madam,

YOU will find, to your grief, I have not hired the carrier to lose the large paper you sent me; but I have certainly more compassion for you than to fill it. One would think you intended I should write a Western Journal, and give you a full and true relation of all the ghosts and apparitions that

all the trifling diversions amongst men; in which our general aim is, to make the time pass off our hands without feeling it, or rather without feeling ourselves, and by getting rid of this small portion of life, to avoid inward disgust. The soul is sent into the body to be the [illegible] of a few days. She knows that this is but a stop, till she may embark for eternity; and that a small space is allowed her to prepare for the voyage: and yet this moment which remains, does so strangely oppress and perplex her, that she only studies how to lose it. She feels an [illegible] burden, be being obliged to live with herself, and think of herself; and therefore her principal care is, to forget herself, and to let this short and precious [illegible] pass away without reflection, by amusing herself with things which prevent the notice of its speed.

are seen in the country of ——: for these are the only remarkable events which happen here.

These are the regions of sleep and repose, not of action. For my own part, I neither hope nor fear, contrive nor design any thing, that relates to this mortal life; but am as much at rest as the people that are burying in their sepulchres. I am in some doubt whether I belong to the society of the living or the dead, and am ready to ask myself,

Is this existence real, or a dream?

I cannot persuade myself to wish you any thing but just what you are, a mere earthly creature. It would be too great a disadvantage to find you in a rank of beings superior to mortals. I am so sensible of the distance at present, that I cannot wish you in a greater elevation. If I asked any thing, perhaps it would be to set you more on an equality, that I might have an opportunity to convince you how sincere and disinterested my friendship is.

By your account, L—— B—— lives a very inactive and inglorious life. Though he has been so long as four months in the world, he has had so few adventures, that I can but just stretch my invention to compose half a song for him.

Thou pretty, smiling, guiltless thing!
Of thee what can the muses sing?
Unless they speak in prophecy,
How great a hero thou shalt be;
Thy country's patron, and the grace
Of ——'s long illustrious race.

With verse and prose, reflections gay and serious, some with a meaning, and others without any meaning at all. I am at last, to your unspeakable satisfaction, come to an end of this fine epistle; and am going to subscribe myself,

Madam,
Yours, &c.

LETTER VII.

Madam,

YOUR concern for Lord ——, is the most melancholy circumstance in the account you have given me of his death. The toil, the long fatigue is past, and all to come is rest and ease to lay. The happy spirit is for ever wandering now,

—— Thro' boundless realms of bliss,
Where pleasure blossoms with eternal spring.

You express yourself with so much good sense and true greatness of mind on this occasion, that nothing could set your character in a more agreeable light. The death of your friends seems to reconcile your thoughts to the unknown regions.

With regard to yourself, it might be no disadvantage to quit the world so early. To die in the pride of life, and all the splendour of youthful virtue, has something far more glorious, than to languish out the dregs of life in the exercise of no virtue but patience.

You find, Madam, I am persuading you to die with great composure. I suppose you think yourself obliged to me for resigning my friends to their destiny with so much calmness and submission; but really it is in mere charity to you; for if you grow wise so soon, I cannot imagine how you will fill up the tedious round of threescore years and ten, if Heaven, for the happiness of mankind, should continue your life to that date.

How many people would surrend their part in the joys of paradise, till the heavens are no more, for the most worthy of those amusements which you despise! Not with you think so justly of this world, and the next, I must confess, the manner of life to which your quality confines you, excites my compassion. Indeed, you may dispense with me for practising this height of charity, while you are the

object of almost every body's envy. But be as happy as the world can make you, it is all but sleeping and dreaming; and as Mr Law says, "being amused with a vain succession of shadows."

This quotation, you may imagine, is to shew my great reading. When I am writing to you, I would indeed shine with every advantage; but the height of my ambition is being,

Madam,

Yours, &c.

LETTER VIII.

Madam,

I find it is generally a very selfish motive that makes me write to you, my design being to extort an answer. If you had but so much disinterested charity, as to write without expecting a reply, I should certainly receive the favour with the utmost gratitude and modesty. However, it is well that you indulge my talent of impertinence, and never strictly insist on common sense.

At present I cannot entertain myself, much less you. The creation seems to want variety; and I am as much inclined to cry for more worlds, as Alexander the Great was; only my uneasiness is for the sake of novelty; for I have little ambition, not enough to leave you in an error, though to my own advantage.

I would not maliciously lessen myself, nor detract from my own good qualities, which certainly appear to my view in their full magnitude; yet such is the force of truth, that I must confess you have given me a sort of imaginary character, and I am an heroine of your own making; as great minds always suppose they find in others the same virtues they really possess themselves.

My letter is of a convenient length; and you will now gladly dismiss

Your most humble servant.

LETTERS TO THE AUTHOR.

LETTER II.

I Was so far from thinking your letter the effect of the spleen, that I even persuaded it was written in one of your gayest intervals. To a mind turned like yours, the thoughts of death must be all serene and agreeable? I fancy you will be pleased with these lines, which Monsieur Menard ordered to be written over his closet-door *.

Lai l'heure de sa naissance,
De pleurer de grands et du fort;
Dès ici que j'attends la mort,
Dans la même, je la commence.

Of this character, be what this will, I [illegible]
[illegible] death. In this character [illegible]
a finish,' and most sure that we can [illegible]
but the eternal hurry that attends it cannot [illegible]
[illegible] of living to regulate [illegible]
[illegible] serious consideration. [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
*[illegible] [illegible]

Had I been born some humble villager,
And in a peaceful cottage pass'd my days,
Far from the guilty pageantry of courts,
In innocence my life had calmly pass'd,
And with a smile I might resign my breath.

The world has, I think, as few charms for me, as for most people of my age; but I must own, I feel a sort of reluctance to part with every thing below, and a dread to enter on those unknown regions, from whence none return to tell us what they find.

Betwixt the whistling of the wind, and the roaring of a fall of water, I have at present a solemn and agreeable concert; and cannot help addressing myself with Mira to the winter:

"To thee my gently drooping head I bend,
"Thy sigh, my sister, and thy tear, my friend;
"On thee I muse, and in thy hast'ning sun
"See life expiring, ere 'tis well begun;
"Thy sick'ning ray, and venerable gloom,
"Shew life's last scene, the solitary tomb."

Adieu.

Cleora.

LETTER II.

WHither shall I direct for you? Are you still an inhabitant of the earth, or ascended to the ethereal regions? Am I addressing a mortal, or an immortal spirit? In what language must I speak? If you are still in this world, I am determined to molest you; and I hope this letter will find you in the midst of some agreeable reverie, and chase the gaudy vision from your fancy.

I cannot see any great virtue in becoming a recluse, and getting the victory by a cowardly flight. I would have you raise your character by venturing

into this wicked town, and by defeiſing the world in the midſt of its dangling temptations.

To read a treatiſe of devotion inſtead of a new play, and preſerve your ſerious temper, ſurrounded with vanity and diverſions, would be a more heroical part, than enjoying an inglorious tranquillity among purling ſtreams, and flowery meadows.

Beſides, here would be the addition of mortification to heighten your virtue; for you would ſcarce find the crying of *ſmall-coal* as harmonious a ſound, as the warbling of nightingales; nor the ſmell of *ſea-coal* ſmoke, as fragrant as the breath of opening violets and primroſes.

But my compariſons are ſo much to the advantage of the country, that I am afraid you will ſuſpect my advice to be the effect of envy; and I had as good throw off a diſguiſe, and own, that at preſent my way of living is a ſeries of impertinence; and were it to continue,

Far rather would I in ſome humble cell,
Diſgate from all that's gay, for ever dwell,
Than waſte my flying hours, and thus divide
My time, 'twixt folly, calumny, and pride;
Still trifling, thus debaſe the gift of ſenſe,
And live the ſlave of dull impertinence.

I have not yet had the curioſity to ſee the new opera. The weather is ſo hot, that I think ſhady groves and cryſtal ſtreams more refreſhing than a crowded theatre. Indeed the town was never more diſagreeable to me than now. I wiſh I know whether it proceeds from being more wiſe, or more dull; I am afraid of the latter; for as to an increaſe of wiſdom, I cannot ſay I am ſenſible of it in any other inſtance.

The greateſt happineſs, perhaps, that can be attained in this world, is only longer endeavour, and not any real pleaſure. How different does it prove from thoſe gay viſions that youth forms to itſelf;

when it first launches out into the flattering ocean! How soon do tempests of trouble, and confusion rise, while nothing is so common as the desire of long life; and yet how small a part of mankind would care to trace back their lives again in the same steps they did before! though, perhaps, the only variety would be, to change one folly for another, to quit the play-house for Omare, or the gentle strains of the opera for the serious contemplation of their own dear persons in a looking-glass.

I am yours, &c.

Cleora.

LETTER III.

I Beg you not to write any more on *Lilliput* paper. I am almost afraid to open your letter, for fear of finding, after a respectful margin, *Madam* at the top, and your name at the bottom, and trackless wastes of blank paper between, for me to fill up at my leisure.

You will be surprised to find, that at a time when my health is declining, I should be planting trees, and laying out walks, as if I thought I had two or three hundred years to enjoy them. I need not assure you I have no such expectations; but it gives me an innocent delight to form these sylvan scenes in an irregular manner, and with a secret art to imitate nature in her negligent appearance.

I have no giants in yew, nor tygers or birds in holly; but instead of them, firs and pines, that grow just as nature designed them; and so intermixed with woodbines, syringes, and other flowery shrubs, that in a few months they will be a perfect wilderness of sweets.

The satisfaction I take in this undertaking, makes me often fancy I am not sincere in my thoughts of soon leaving it — I am as only in my garden, and as much surfeited with the *grand* [illegible] as ever Diocletian was.

Sento qualche stupidita che me impedisce di godere una vita nella corte piena di splendore e cerimonie vanti, che quella che si trova nella campagna senza gloria et senza rumore.

Every plant that flourishes gives me a pleasure, and every drooping tree infects me with languishing. I watch every decay among my flowers, as a celebrated beauty would do grey hairs or wrinkles.

I have two or three sheep that perplex me as much as le Berger Extravagant's flock did him; and were I to indulge my rural delights, and return no more to the noisy town, I should fall into the most soothing and agreeable madness imaginable.

Come, Amyrallis, come, and with me share,
The blooming woodbines, and the fragrant air;
Together o'er the flow'ry walks we'll rove,
Or fit beneath the shelter of the grove;
While flocks upon the hills around us bleat,
And echoes to the streams their voice repeat.
Among the willows in a gloomy shade,
By nature form'd, their rushes a cascade;
Upon its banks you undisturb'd may lye,
While contemplation waits you to the sky.

Cleora.

LETTER IV.

PEople seem at present more busily employed in preparing for the King's birth-day, than for their own last; and appear to be in greater anxiety for a seat in the dancing-room, than for a seat in paradise.

I was last night with ——— A barge of mu-

* I feel within me a kind of stupidity, which hinders me to enjoy that happiness at a court taken up with splendour and ceremony, that I reside in a country-life free from pomp and hurry.

he followed us. But in the midst of this gaiety, your letter was not the only thing that put me in mind of mortality. I had such a violent pain in my head, that neither the wit of the company, the sweetness of the music, nor the beauty of the evening, could give me any sincere delight. — If pleasure be the lot of man, it must be in something beyond the grave; for, on this side, constant experience tells us, all is vanity.

But this confession has hardly any influence on human conduct: for people in a high rank must often act against their reason, to avoid being thought unfashionable; and, for fear of being thought mad by the modish world, must act in a manner which they are sensible is being truly so, to keep in vogue with their polite contemporaries.

I cannot forbear thinking with myself, that if a a being endued with reason, and a capacity of judging, (an inhabitant of another planet, and an utter stranger to our nature,) could take a view of our actions, he would be at a loss what to imagine we were; and had he no informer, but were to judge by our conduct, he would certainly either imagine that we were a species who were insured always to live in the world we now inhabit; or else, that after enjoying ourselves here as long as we could, we were to be insensible for ever, without the least expectation of a future judgment, punishment, or reward.

You would hardly make an apology for desiring me to write to you, if you knew how much pleasure the injunction gives to,

Yours unalterably.

LETTER V.

THE news of my Lord ——'s death has been so great a shock to me, that I want all your ar-

guments against long life, to reconcile me to the shortness of his, at the latter end of seventy years. I have much ado to think that he did not die too young, since he had strength enough to endure the most exquisite torments. I loved him most sincerely as a relation, and esteemed him as a most valuable and faithful friend. My thoughts are continually employed about him, and I grieve for my own loss, and rejoice at his gain in the same moment; and cannot forbear following him with my speculations to the mansions of eternal peace, and inquiring, with Mr Tickell, in his verses on the death of Mr Addison,

"In what new region to the just assign'd?
"What new employments please th' unbody'd
"mind?
"A winged virtue, through the ethereal sky,
"From world to world unweary'd does he fly?
"Or curious trace the long laborious maze
"Of Heaven's decrees, where wond'ring angels
"gaze?
"Does he delight to hear bold seraphs tell
"How Michael battled, and the dragon fell?
"Or, mix'd with milder cherubim, to glow
"In hymns of love?"

I cannot help fancying, how his soul is charmed to find itself at liberty, and no longer chained to an infirm body, which continually clogged it in all its operations. How is he transported to be admitted to the presence of God his Saviour! And with what delight (if we may be allowed to conjecture that he remembers her) will he see his wife, for whom he has shed so many tears, in all the pomp of celestial glory! With what pleasure will he gaze upon the skies, while they unfold their sparkling treasures! and with what joy and wonder observe the planets in their courses, and look into all the deep philosophy of heaven! With what attention listen to the

songs of angels, while they tune their golden lyres to the praise of God and of the Lamb! And how will his heart overflow with gratitude to his Saviour, while he reflects on what he suffered to purchase these pleasures for him!

When I consider the advantages of his change, I blame my grief; and yet who can forbear to lament the best of friends, the honestest of men, and the most agreeable companion that ever was; especially in an age like this, where so little honour, friendship, and sincerity, are to be found? But I am not going to write a satyr upon mankind, and therefore will say no more, but that

I am faithfully yours,

Cleora.

LETTER VI.

To Clorinda.

YOU ask me, my dear Clorinda, what is the reason of the deep melancholy you observe in me; and are amazed to see how little relish I have for the things which amuse other people of my age and quality. Your partiality for me makes you fancy that my indifference is the result of a good understanding; and that the force of my judgment has been able to subdue my passions. But, alas! how are you mistaken! My melancholy proceeds from the irregularity of my affections: love, vanity, distrust, and repentance, conspire to rack me; and,

When I look back on all my former days,
The only comfort that review affords
Is, that they're past——
For through their course I cannot recollect

One free from sorrow, guilt, or disappointment?
Yet heedless still through the same paths I err,
And rashly venture on the dang'rous road:
With open eyes, like one asleep, I walk,
And drink the cup, although I know 'tis poison'd.
Why am I led thus captive by my will,
While reason, faithful guide, for ever warns
My drowsy soul to shun impending danger?
This night may be my last; I ne'er again
May see the dawning of another morn!
Shall I forego the joys of heav'n, to soothe
A wayward fancy, or destructive passion?
Ah, no! let ev'ry faculty unite
To break the yoke? Reason, resume thy sway,
And calm these wild disorders of my breast!
Whisper thy sacred dictates to my heart,
And bend it to th' observance of thy laws!
Inspire my soul with ev'ry heav'nly thought,
And shew me wisdom's path! direct my steps,
Nor leave me thus benighted!

There is not in nature a greater contradiction than my thoughts and actions: and it is impossible for me to account why they are so. I pursue the pleasures of the world, at the same time that I know them to be fleeting and worthless. I distract myself about the opinion of the public, though I despise the injustice of its censures. I cannot forbear repining at my unhappy circumstances, in suffering myself to be tormented with the ingratitude of some whom I thought my friends; not weeping, while I indulge a hopeless passion; though I know that

Quickly will my glass of life be run,
And with it all my joys and sorrows gone.
Then I no more shall feel Love's cruel fire,
But cold and peaceful to the grave retire;
No more shall weep for the licentious wrongs
Of judgments rash, or scourge of base-born tongues.

And yet not even this reflection can arm me with patience. I am uneasy with my faults, without correcting them; and in love with my duty without practising it. I act contrary to my highest reason, and turn rebel to the authority of my own judgment.

After this account of me, you will not wonder that I retire as much as I can from noise and hurry; though no shade is gloomy enough to hide my folly from my eyes, nor any retreat calm enough to lull my passions. However, I do not yet despair of conquering these vexations, by the assistance of religion, and the grace of that God, who will always be found by those who seek him, in an humble sense of their own unworthiness, and a firm reliance upon his mercy.

I am never in so whimsical a situation of mind, in the midst of all my absurdities, as to forget that I am, by a thousand obligations,

Your faithful friend,
and obliged servant,
Irit.

LETTER VII.

To Almira.

My dear Almira,

YOU will be extremely afflicted, though not surprised, to hear, that, after languishing so many months, the unhappy Teramina yesterday expired in my arms. The day before her death, she ordered every body but me to leave the room; and desired me to sit down by her bed-side. Then, taking me by the hand, she spoke to me in the following manner:

I see, my faithful Pamela, that you are finking under the affliction which you suffer, to find, that a few hours will deprive you, not only of a sincere and tender friend, but of a person whom your partiality inclines you to believe has some merit. I cannot leave you under this mistake; and go out of the world with the guilt of deceiving you. It is not possible for me to let you waste your tears for a wretch who is unworthy of them. Yet let what I have suffered for my crimes, induce you to compassion, and my hard fate warn you to guard against the first glimmerings of a guilty passion: for that has been my ruin. You know I was married extremely young, and upon the fashionable mercenary views of estate and titles. However, my husband's merit, (which, to my eternal confusion, I must ever acknowledge,) joined to his fondness for me, gained so far upon my heart, that, if I had not all the passion that attends love, I had all the tenderness of an exalted friendship for him. In this calm state I passed the first six years of our marriage; and had several children by him. But then his public employment obliged him to inquire for a person to assist him in the discharge of his office. He had a young man recommended to him for that purpose; whom he took into his house. He had ten thousand good qualities. He was just three and twenty, and perfectly beautiful; at least, to me he appeared so. But why should I describe him to you, or strive to conceal the temptation, while I own the guilt! You know the destroyer of my peace and his own. It is the wretched Alonzo. He had not been long in the family before I began to have an affection for him, that frighted me. His name affected me. I could not hear him mentioned, without trembling; or see him unexpectedly, without becoming as pale as ashes; and, in a few months, I found my heart was entirely given up to him. What eloquence can express my grief at this discovery! My vows, my husband's merit, my family, my fame, now to

peared to me in their full force, and joined to rack me. I passed my nights in tears; and rose more weary than I lay down. I flew to religious books for succour, but in vain; I had neglected the danger till it was irretrievable. I wandered in my house and gardens more like a guilty ghost than a living creature. And to add to my distress, I observed an unusual melancholy in the face of my dear Alonzo. He was always in my way, alone and pensive. One evening, as I was standing, just without the door, in the court before my house, observing the moon and stars, which were shining in their full splendour, and wishing myself above those glittering luminaries, that I might be no longer subject to that criminal passion which rendered my life a burden, I chanced to put my hands behind me. I had not stood long in that posture, before I thought I felt something gently touch my hand; and, looking round, I found it to be Alonzo; who, seeing me about to leave him, took one of my hands, and holding it betwixt his, pressed it to his bosom, with an air of tenderness which pierced my very soul. However, I was enough Mistress of myself to ask him, what behaviour of mine had encouraged him to hope, that I would endure so unaccountable an insolence? He told me, that what he did was not the effect of hope, but of absolute despair; that his misery was grown to such an height, that it was incapable of receiving any aggravation, and that though he loved me to distraction, he did not even entertain a wish, that I should return a passion so much below me; and that if I could forgive the frenzy that had brought him to make this declaration, he would for the future observe an eternal silence. At these words he burst into tears, and I left him with the utmost precipitation, to conceal a tenderness, which neither the obligations of my duty, or any other reflection, were strong enough to suppress. I was now sunk to the depth of misery, I had listened to the declaration of a love forbidden

by all the laws of Heaven and earth, and contrary to every principle of virtue which my education had instilled into my soul. I knew not what method to take to free myself and Alonzo from so unhappy a situation. Sometimes I resolved to feign some cause of dislike, and prevail with my husband to discharge him. When I had summoned all my aids of virtue, modesty, and pride, and fancied myself able to make the dreadful proposal, my passion brought back his idea to my heart, with all the charms of his mind and person, and represented him not only ruined in his peace, but in his fortune, by my severity. Several months passed in this state of anxiety, and he religiously observed his word, now ever once mentioned his passion; but at last the disorder of his mind threw him into a fever, and his life was despaired of. Judge what I endured upon this occasion. However, conscious modesty hindered me from going near him in his illness, which lasted almost a fortnight; but at last his youth, and the strength of his constitution, overcame his disease, and he was able to get up the stairs that led to my apartment, and was at the door of it just as I went to call some of the servants. At that moment every good angel left me, and I could not forbear expressing my joy to find him able to leave his bed. "Alas!" said he, "why do you with my misery prolonged? Death is my only road to peace, since I am hated by you." These words, joined with the paleness of his looks, disarmed all my resolutions; and I told him a secret which I ought rather to have died than have uttered. I owned my passion, and begged him to live for my sake, if not for his own. He was amazed and overjoyed at this confession, and soon recovered his health. We now went on in a thoughtless road of pleasure, and indulged our mutual passion, till at last he pressed me to give him the most guilty proofs of it, and strengthened his intreaties with all the arguments that so good an understanding, assisted by the powers of hell, could inspire. But as passion

ately as I loved him, he could not, with all his eloquence, erase the sentiments of innate virtue, and convictions of religion, from my soul. I was not enough abandoned, but to look on adultery as a point of horror not to be out-lived: and though I allowed him liberties, which I am now convinced were guilty, yet I always kept myself from the last steps of vice; and was so happy, that instead of my yielding to his arguments, he was convinced by mine, and asked pardon of God and me for the criminal design he had pursued. We now resolved, by the strictness of our lives, to make what amends we could for the errors we had fallen into; and for these last three years have applied ourselves seriously to the securing of our salvation. But we have never been able to conquer our unhappy passion, though we have suppressed the effects of it. It is this eternal contradiction, joined to the remorse I feel for my ingratitude to the best of husbands, which has brought me into the condition you see. Happy, if, by losing my life, I could atone for my injustice! How gentle would my agonies appear, if, by their excess, I could hope, that they would be accepted as part of my punishment! Whatever I could suffer here would be joyful to me, were I sure it could entitle me to mercy hereafter. Here she fell into a swoon; but quickly revived, and lived till next day. About an hour before she died, she sent for her husband and children, and took leave of them with great tenderness; and then lying down as if she would sleep, expired in a few minutes. They are in vast affliction for her. But no words can paint the despair of Alonzo. He has neither spoke nor ate since her death; and seems so perfectly stupified, that I fear his senses are gone for ever.

Adieu, my dear Almira! my tears flow so fast, that I can write no more.

Emilia.

LETTER VIII.

By the same hand.

My Lord,

I Have at last taken the only means left me, to free myself from your importunities, and the weakness of my own heart, which argued but too much on your side. I found my fame, and every other consideration, too light, when weighed in the balance against your love: but the force of religion has turned the scale, and made me resolve to spend the remainder of my weeping days in a convent. It is in that holy retreat that I hope to find the peace which I lost in the world. You cannot be sorry for this resolution, when you consider of it. For not all the polite maxims of the present age are sufficient to discountenance virtue, or bring vice into reputation; or could they prevail in this world, would they be admitted at God's tribunal. Your Lordship may call this bigotry, or any other name, which the levity of your fancy, or modish principles, can inspire you with; but a day will come, in which you will find it sacred truth; and you will be glad, that, by shutting myself for ever by your sight, I hindered you from the guilt you have pursued, and put it out of your power to ruin me. It would be no very pleasing reflection on your death-bed, that you had seduced a soul from the paths of peace and virtue; and, to give yourself a fashionable liberty, had entailed misery and infamy on a family who have served you with zeal and affection. What has my aged father left undone to support your interest in the country? With what tenderness did my mother educate your two young sisters, who were committed to her care? And, in return, you would bring their only daughter to the last degree of sin and shame. This may be genteel but surely it is not

noble. How false are your sentiments of honour and justice! You thought it would be a reflection on your character, to marry into a family so much below you in birth and fortune; but are not ashamed to return a thousand obligations (pardon me, my Lord; for great as you are, I must call them such) with the highest injury. And though you have not succeeded in your guilt so far, you robbed two ancient servants, nay, friends of yours, of the joy of their eyes, and delight of their age, their only child; who, by your licentious love, is forced to seclude herself from them, and the whole world, for ever. I dread to think how they will support this affliction. I left a letter on the table to acquaint my mother with my retreat; but concealed the cause, for your sister's sake; since she might perhaps refuse to discharge herself from an office which she has executed with so much care, and has produced her so cruel a requital. Let the sorrow you brought upon my parents content you, and do not carry ruin into another family. Why should you employ the finest understanding, and the most graceful person, to promote the cause of hell; and why must the rank, power, and wealth, which were given you to diffuse happiness all around you, only serve to make you capable of splendid mischief?

I am now in a situation, where I cannot be the entertainment of your idle hours, and where the time I spent in listening to you, shall now be employed in praying for your reformation. The tears which I have often poured out in vain, to dissuade you from your guilty enterprise, shall be shed before God for your soul. For though you have used me with the utmost cruelty, your eternal welfare will always be the tenderest concern of

The unhappy

Arabella.

LETTER IX.

I Have been on the very borders of the grave, and I have for several months endured all the pains and languishments of a dangerous illness. But it has pleased God to restore me to so tolerable a measure of health, that I am now able to think and write again. And with what pleasure do I feel myself once more at ease!

How ungrateful are the generality of mankind while they enjoy this blessing! and how seldom (when they are well) do they reflect on the inconvenience and faintness, the weariness and pains which attend a sick-bed! I never was sensible what I owed to God for my health, till I came to want it. While my blood flowed with an even uninterrupted course in its channels, and my arteries and nerves were able to perform their several functions, I overlooked that mercy which had contrived them for those operations. But as soon as they were obstructed, I was sensible of their value. And while I sickened at the sight of my food, I envied the peasant, whose health enabled him to earn his dinner with the sweat of his brows; and while I was in torment in a stately apartment, and tumbled on a bed of down, how fervently would I have exchanged conditions with the hind, who, in a humble cottage, was leaning on sheaves of straw! How readily would I have parted with all the vanity of my titles, all the advantages of riches and grandeur, to purchase health! health which gives relish to every enjoyment, and, like the rays of light, diffuses beauty upon every object! When I was ill, the beauty of the creation was effaced to me: I found no longer harmony in the sounds of music, nor joy while the sun poured his meridian glory; but turned

my eyes from the intolerable lustre, and wished for the shades of night to vail his radiance! I had no pleasure in seeing every thing round me flourish, while I withered and decayed. The birds that warbled near my window, seemed to sing my funeral dirge; and every fly that buzzed in my chamber, sounded like an alarm to judgment. When night came, I considered that probably I might never see day-light again, till the morning of the resurrection dawned upon the earth. And when I was drowsy, and inclined to sleep, I imagined that I should perhaps never wake, till I heard the voice of the archangel, and the sound of the last trumpet; nor lift up my head, till I saw the Son of man coming in the clouds, with power and great glory. This near prospect of death and judgment has put the world, and all its gaudy vanities, into a just light, and has convinced me of the falsity of human comforts. And I have reason to bless God, who has given me such an opportunity of seeing things as they really are; and, by making me sensible of the small consolation that all the earth can afford in the time of illness, and at the hour of death, has directed my eyes and hopes to heaven, and made me know the value of those hours which were too often wasted in guilt or folly. And believe me, Leonora, you will some time or other be sensible of this important truth. You are not more secure of years to come, than I appeared to be before this illness; and will find the splendour of a court, and all the flatteries of life, miserable comforters upon a sick-bed. The pleasures of this world will withdraw, and nothing remain with you but a sense of your past conduct; and when you find yourself ready to quit the stage, you will have no concern about any thing, but how you have acted your part.

I am still very weak, though perfectly at ease; and I could be satisfied to remain so always, rather

than hazard being again a slave to my passions and pleasures! I am, with all imaginable sincerity,

Your most faithful

Diana.

LETTER X.

To Lysander.

I Told you, some time since, that my affairs would oblige me to pass this summer at my estate in the west. I have been at it these six weeks: I brought no company hither but Cleomedon, who is so fond of his studies, that I seldom see him, unless it be at meals; but then he is always sprightly and chearful. And, at other times, I entertain myself either in the park or gardens; which afford me so much amusement that I never find the day too long.

I cannot forbear repeating to you an adventure which I met with a few days ago.——As I was riding over some of my farms, I came to the brow of an extreme high hill, from whence I had the prospect of the most beautiful valley imaginable. It was full of woods, and watered with a large river; in some places it run very broad and straight, in others it was more contracted, and flowed in a thousand windings; sometimes it was lost among the woods, and rose again with fresh beauty as it run through the flowery lawns. I was so charmed with the sight of this sylvan scene, that I longed to be in it. But the difficulty was how to get down the hill; for that side next the valley was almost perpendicular, and so rocky, and covered with wood, that it seemed unpassable. However, I dismounted, and leading my horse, found a narrow winding, by which I made a shift to get to the bottom of the hill, at the foot of which was a delightful plain, here and there interspersed with spreading oaks, beech, and

sycomore trees. Here I had the pleasure to observe the spring of the river that watered that beautiful valley. It gushes out of the side of the rock; and, after falling from one cleft to another, a great height, runs even with the grass through the plains and woods. I now got on horseback again; and, following the course of the river about three or four furlongs, I came to a low house, behind which there was a plot of trees, and before a little court, which had no other fence than a laurel-hedge breast-high. There was a little wicket which stood open, and the neatness of the place tempted me to go in; which I did with the better assurance, because I imagined, by the appearance and size of the house, that it was not inhabited by any persons of distinction. I crossed the court without seeing any body; and came into a hall, the neatness of which is not to be described. But I own I was surprised to see a harpsichord, upon which lay some music-books. I had the curiosity to look into them; and found some of them were opera-airs, but the greater part hymns and anthems. There lay on the table two large folios of maps, and upon the ground I observed a pair of very fine globes. A furniture so different from what I expected, made me uncertain whether I should follow my curiosity, which led me to go up a flair-case that was at one end of the hall; or go back without disturbing the owners of the house, who I now began to believe were of a different rank from what I at first imagined; and yet it was inconceivable to me how any persons of distinction should be in such a house. My curiosity at last prevailed, and I went up. But when I came near the top of the stairs, I heard a person reading with great justness, in a clear voice, which seemed to be a woman's. I stopped a little to listen to her; and at last, turning on my right hand, I observed a door which stood half open, from whence I imagined the voice came. I drew near it without any noise, and could see a grave well-looking woman of about fifty, who was

reading aloud to two very beautiful young ones, who were at work embroidering flowers on white silk. They were dressed alike in white satin waistcoats, and brown lutestring petticoats; and upon their heads fine laced caps, made like those of the common peasants. They had an air of innocence and modesty greater than I ever saw. She who appeared the elder of the two had dark hair, and the most blooming complexion imaginable. She was tall, and finely shaped; and might have passed for an inimitable beauty, had not the young creature who sat by her shewed that it was possible even to surpass her. Her hair was almost flaxen, and her skin could scarce be equalled by any poetical simile; she had large blue eyes, and her eye-brows and eyelashes were a dark brown; she had a sweetness in her countenance which would have disarmed a tyger of its rage. I had considered them but a few moments, when she, who seemed the elder of the two young women, looked up, and seemed surprised at the sight of a stranger. However, she rose with great civility, and said, "Madam, here is a gentle-"man, who, I believe, would speak with you." I then was so confounded, that I neither knew how to retire, or make an excuse for so unaccountable a visit. But the eldest of the ladies asked me to come in, with so benign and cheerful an aspect, that it gave me courage to own the occasion of my intrusion, and ask a thousand pardons for it. To which she answered, "That my curiosity was its own pu-"nishment, since it had made me take so much "pains to see what was so little worth it, as her re-"tirement." I had now time to view the room they were in. It was hung, to the top of the chairs, with fine Indian matting; above which, all round the room, were shelves filled with books; and, upon looking into them, I found them to be an admirable collection of history, divinity, and travels. There were a few books of the best philosophy, and some plays. There were upon stands several jarons of

flowers; and, in short, every thing was so elegant and charming, that I began to fancy myself in an enchanted habitation, and could not forbear expressing my desire to know how people of so extraordinary a genius came to live in so very retired a manner? Which the elderly lady perceiving, told me, that if I had patience, she would give me a faithful account of it. She said her husband was the heir of a noble family; that his name was Theanor, by whom she had two daughters, which were the young women I saw; that her husband died when the eldest was betwixt eight and nine years old, and left great debts. In vain did she apply to his rich relations; they would not assist her: so that she found herself either obliged to alter her way of living, or leave his debts unpaid; which though the laws did not force her to satisfy, she thought herself bound to do by all the rules of justice and honour. She therefore discharged all her servants except two maids, and an ancient clergyman, whom she kept to instruct her daughters. With this small family she retired to this house, where she said she had lived upwards of fifteen years. She paid her husband's debts in the first seven; but had found so much peace in that solitude, that she was loath to quit it, and had the pleasure to find both her daughters in the same mind. I could not forbear asking how they amused themselves in so absolute a retreat, and in what manner they divided the day? In answer to which she told me, that indeed they seldom went abroad; and that when she had given me an account of one day, she told me their whole course of life for the last fifteen years.

"As soon as we rise," said she, "we meet in a "little chapel below stairs, where the clergyman "I mentioned to you, reads prayers to us, and we "sing a psalm. After this, we have our breakfast; "and my daughters amuse themselves with their "music or painting, as they like best, while I am "busied with the affairs of my family. About

"eleven-o'clock we go into a room, where we pre-
"pare medicines for the poor, who cannot afford
"better help, and there have a preſs filled with
"clothes for them of all ſorts: and in the drawers
"under are Bibles, and other books of devotion;
"that while we take care of their bodies, their
"ſouls may not be entirely neglected. Here we
"ſpend our time, till we are ready to dreſs for din-
"ner. After dinner my daughters play on the harp-
"ſichord, and ſing, or ſometimes we only converſe
"till we have a mind to come up hither, where one
"of us conſtantly reads, while the others work.
"In the evening we walk till ſupper; after which
"we call our little family, and end the day, as we
"begun it, in praiſing God, and imploring his pro-
"tection."

I told her, "I was no longer ſurpriſed that they
"liked their way of living, ſince it appeared to me
"to be ſuch as muſt entirely ſecure them from all
"kinds of diſcontent."

They none of them anſwered to this; and, upon looking up, I ſaw the face of the eldeſt daughter covered with tears. I expreſſed my concern at this ſudden alteration, and begged to know the occaſion of it. "Alas!" ſaid her mother, "this unhappy
"girl is more to be pitied than you imagine; and it
"is only on her account that I feel ſorrow. About
"five years ago ſhe fell deſperately in love with a
"young man, who was equally ſo with her. But
"the misfortune was, that he was not only much
"below her in his fortune, but of a family which
"are notorious for their wickedneſs; though he is
"not ſo himſelf; for his mother, who was perfect-
"ly virtuous, had inſtilled into him all the princi-
"ples of piety and morality. They had long had
"a mutual tenderneſs before I perceived it; but
"when I did, and found how much Roſella's heart
"was fixed, it afflicted me ſo, that I fell into a deep
"melancholy, which ended in a dangerous ſickneſs,
"and I was given over by my phyſicians. I then

"told Roſella the cauſe of my illneſs, and adviſed "her againſt a marriage, the apprehenſions of which "had, in all probability, coſt me my life. She fell "on her knees by my bed-ſide, and, bathing my "hands with her tears, begged I would endeavour "to recover; for if ſomebody was to be the victim "of her unhappy paſſion, ſhe was reſolved it ſhould "be herſelf, ſince death would be leſs terrible to her "than offending me. I rejoiced, and was ſurpri-"ſed at her compliance, and hoped her affections "had not been ſo firmly rooted as I ſince found. "When I began to recover, ſhe begged leave to "write to Alphonſo, (for that was the name of her "lover,) and give him an account of the promiſe "ſhe had made, and the reaſons which forced her "to it. He received the news with inexpreſſible "grief, and the next day left his father's houſe; to "which he has never yet returned, nor has any "body heard of him. I have been ſo much touch-"ed with my daughter's ſufferings, and the patience "with which ſhe endured them, without ever up-"braiding me as the cauſe of them, that I now wiſh "as ardently as ſhe does, to ſee him return; that I "may have the pleaſure of rewarding her filial pie-"ty, by giving her hand where ſhe long ago placed "her heart." She could not end this relation with-out tears, in which her daughters accompanied her.

I own I was moved with compaſſion at the ſtory of Roſella; and cannot take my thoughts from the charming retirement, or forget the beauty of Me-liſſa, which was the name of the younger daughter.

I ſtaid till it was dark, and then took my leave, extremely delighted with ſo uncommon an adven-ture. Adieu.

Bellamour.

[*See the continuation of her ſtory in letter 12. part II.*]

LETTERS

MORAL AND ENTERTAINING.

PART II.

LETTER I.

To Lady Sophia, from a young woman of quality, relating the occasion of her leaving her father's house.

Madam,

WHEREVER I am, it will be a pleasure to you, I am perſuaded, to know I have found a retreat entirely to my own ſatisfaction. The occaſion of my flight and concealment you are partly acquainted with. I found my father inflexible in his reſolution of marrying me to a foreigner of great diſtinction, one of his own principles, a bigotted Papiſt. My mother, you know, was a ſtrict Proteſtant; and, by her marriage-articles, had ſecured her own liberty, and that of educating her daughters in the ſame profeſſion. I was their only child, carefully inſtructed in

those sacred truths, which, by the assistance of Heaven, I will never renounce, but rather give up my title to all the dazzling advantages the world can tempt me with. It is for this I am a voluntary exile from my father's house; who after my mother's death, intrenched on my religious liberty, restrained me from the public worship, and forbid me reading my Bible. These severities, with the French match he was treating for me, put me on the desperate adventure of privately quitting his family, and securing my freedom in some humble disguise. No person on earth was privy to my design, but a near relation of my mother's, a person of strict honour and piety, who encouraged me to sacrifice every thing, rather than renounce my faith, or break my peace with Heaven and my own conscience.

I got the habit of a country girl; and, with this gentleman's assistance, was carried into one of the most fertile counties in England, till we came near a large farm-house, of which he had some knowledge, and there he left me to make my own fortune. I went on with cautious steps, till I came to the entrance of a square court, surrounded with a hedge of hawthorn in its full bloom. Here I met the mistress of the family. She appeared young, and, in a clean modest dress, was perfectly agreeable. There was something in her aspect so gentle and beneficent, that I could not help being interested in her welfare, from the first moment I saw her.

She was then dealing out the remains of a plentiful table, to a company of indigent people; who, with lifted hands and grateful hearts, implored Heaven to reward her, in a thousand blessings. A very pretty boy and girl, with sparkling eyes, and ruddy cheeks, stood hanging on her apron; who, to imitate their mother, gave away all the little treasure they had in their pockets to the beggars children; and then fell a crying, because she would not suffer

them to pull off their own shoes and stockings, to give to some that were bare-footed.

As soon as she had dismissed her dependents, I offered my service, and told her the distresses to which I must be exposed, if she refused me. She perceived my concern was unfeigned; and seeing me young, with the bloom of health in my looks, (without any of that impertinent caution I expected,) she agreed to receive me into her service. She then happened to want a servant, rather to share with her in the management of a large family, than to be employed in any domestic drudgery. I know not why, but she seemed pleased with me; and I, with equal content, entered my new station, without any melancholy reviews of my past grandeur, the dignity of my birth, or the delicacy of my education. The glorious motive for which I had resigned the splendid vanities of life, gave an unspeakable alacrity to my mind, and filled it with that ineffable peace that springs from conscious virtue.

Be these celestial consolations mine, and the world, with all its pomp, resign.

I did not see my new master till the evening, when he came home, with a train, not of beaux and powdered footmen, but of industrious honest labourers, some of his own household, and others hired by the day, whom he punctually paid at the close of it, repeating that rule of the sacred scripture, *Thou shalt not sleep with the wages of an hireling.* He is a very grave man, twice the age of his wife; a person of great prudence and unblemished honesty; very hospitable to strangers, as gentle and compassionate to his servants. Country-business is his great delight, in the management of which Heaven has blessed him with uninterrupted prosperity, and vast increase.

The farm-house is indeed somewhat antique, but spacious and pleasant. A more agreeable situation

cannot be imagined, nor a greater variety of sylvan scenes described in poetry, unless Mr Thomson's Spring and Summer seasons could rise in one inchanting prospect. The wide landskip round is all my master's property; his snowy flocks are ranging on the hills, his grazing herds lowing through the plains: the mountains are crowned with the great Creator's bounty, and the vallies made vocal with his praises.

These scenes of innocence and plenty bring back the patriarchal ages to view, and give me a sort of pious pleasure. Methinks I see the plains of Mamre, covered with the wealthy Hebrews flocks and herds; or, shifting the scene for the fruitful fields of Haran, the beauteous Rachel following her fleecy charge, seems to come in view. Boaz and his reapers appeared to my fancy, in the jovial month of harvest. In that chearful season, here was no wild riot, no rude intemperance; nothing but harmless merriment appeared among any of my master's domestics. As soon as they enter his service, he gives them a Bible, and the Practice of Piety; with strict orders, that they appear constantly on the Lord's day at the public worship, unless they have such an excuse as they dare carry to the last tribunal.

It will not be incredible to one of your piety, that I can make myself easy in a way of life so different from the gaieties of a court, to which I have been inured. I am not only easy, but really happy. My mistress, who has a sweetness of temper not to be equalled, is fond of me; and leaves me, not to be idle, but, which is much better, to chuse my own employment. You know my stature is above the common height; and since I came here, I am rather grown taller, and somewhat more plump; so that a little business does me no manner of harm.

I have entirely put off the fine lady, and all my court-airs. I have almost forgot I am an earl's daughter; and should start at the sound of Lady Francis. Instead of that, I am plain Rosalinda,

without any other appellation, but what the gentle swains now and then give me, of a handsome lass, or a proper damsel; with which I am infinitely better pleased, than when I was an angel, or a goddess, and impiously addressed in the strains of adoration. If ever I return to the modish world, I must learn to dance again, having perfectly forgot to make my honours. I have made but one courtesy since I came here, and that was to a squire; who, because it was something low, and not finished in the twinkling of an eye, catched me by the hand, verily believing I was sinking to the ground in a fainting fit. I am not turned Quaker; but I have laid aside all ceremony, and call every body in the village by their Christian names, except my master and mistress, and the parson of the parish; whom I cannot pass by without telling you, he is a man of exemplary piety, of universal charity, and a great blessing to this place.

My splendid distinction of being the head servant, as it gives me a pretence to keep my distance, and to be as reserved as I think fit; so it frees me from any drudgery but what is my own choice; the worst of which is, rubbing a long oaken table, that graces the hall, and is kept as bright as a looking-glass. My Saturday's work is dressing four or five spacious chimnies with pionies, holly-oaks, or branches of bays. Some part of my time (and that the most delightful) is spent in rambling the fields with my master's children, the pretty boy and girl I mentioned. While they are following their little sports, I give up my thoughts to some innocent reverie, or pious meditation; to this the view of the fair creation invites me. Here the present Deity seems to challenge a natural homage, while he cheers me in the glory of the sun, refreshes me in the fragrant breeze, is beauty in the flowers of the field, and harmony in the nightingale's voice. With a sort of ecstacy I repeated Milton's morning hymn, to

which the Italian translation gives new life and music.

"Gloriose opre tue tutte son queste
"Padre del bene onnipotente; E' tuo
"Questo composto universal, cotanto
"A meraviglia bello; or qua'l sarui
Ogetto di stupor, tu stesso
"Ineffabil———*.

But I am not always in the sublime: I sometimes descend to gather cowslips and daisies, or pursue some gaudy butterfly, with my pretty companions; or please myself with dressing up their fine flaxen hair with tufts of flowers.

These, you will think, are very guiltless amusements; and if I should tell you I have an amour, altogether as guiltless, dear Lady Sophia, would you not believe me? I suppose you will ask me, if my charms have captivated the Lord of the manor, or a justice of the quorum, or the high Sheriff of the county. Alas! my ambition sleeps: I should not aim at these glorious conquests, not even in my best apparel; and, in that, I must tell you, I am as fine as any shepherdess in an Opera. But if you was to see the gentle youth that I have the vanity to think sighs for me, you will believe him some poetical form: he is so elegant, so beautiful, that when he appears, the scene is all Arcadia; and (except a certain person with a star and garter) he is the handsomest youth that ever your eyes beheld. Nor will you wonder, when I tell you, his descent is from a younger branch of the S——— family, a race remarkable for heroes and beauties. By the extravagance of his ancestors, the estate has been long sunk to about two or three hundred a year. This youth

* [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Milton's Paradise Lost, [illegible]

was left from his infancy to the care of a grandmother, and bred as well as her narrow fortune would allow: but it is easy to perceive, he owes nothing but to nature, which has given him every advantage, without the vices of a polite education. He is about my own age, hardly turned of nineteen. When I first saw him, he was sitting under a shady beech, with an English Pastor Fido in his hand; he appeared like another Adonis in the softest bloom of life. I cannot describe him better than in the following verses, writ by Lady B——s on another subject.

"His faultless shape appear'd with ev'ry grace;
"While beauty sat triumphant in his face:
"His hair, the palest brown in ringlets flow'd,
"And charms beyond the reach of art bestow'd;
"His forehead white as snow, his radiant eyes
"The bright celestial blue that paints the skies:
"A guiltless blush his blooming cheeks disclose,
"The native tincture of an op'ning rose:
"His aspect open, artless, and serene,
"Reveal'd the spotless mind that dwelt within."

In this perfection of youthful charms, he has all that modesty that rises from a delicacy of thought, and a constant fear of offending. I am so demure and reserved, that he has not the least suspicion of my partiality for him; nor dares discover his own for me, though he believes his station so superior to mine. He looks and sighs, but is as silent as your great-grandmother's busto that stands on his monument. I am indeed a very great prude, and never gave him an opportunity to speak on this subject; but if I should, the attempt would infallibly suffocate him. He lately brought me a basket of flowers from a little neat garden of his grandmother's, but he stood so long in suspense, with the basket in his hands, that I feared the fragrant blossoms would have been withered before he could [illegible] to a resolution to let me have them.

He would certainly have presented them to the be been received with more assurance, and a better grace, had never fail to encourage modest virtue, and scatter every human care.

Rosalinda.

LETTER II.

To Lady Sophia, from the same.

NOt bubbling fountains to the thirsty swain, were ever more welcome, dear Lady Sophia, than your letter to me. Nothing can be more solemn than the profession of your friendship, nor more agreeable than your raillery on my gallant. He may be, as you imagine, one of Count Gabalis' Sylphs, or some gentle spirit of the vale, propitious to virtuous lovers; or of the number of the Sylvan genii, with whom he seems to converse more than with any thing of human race. I have seldom seen him, but either walking in some verdant inclosure under a hedge-row of shady trees, or sitting with a flute in his hand, by some purling rivulet, mimicking the nightingale's pensive note; while the melting music glides along the stream, and echoes through the flowery dale. In one of my rambles with my little mistress, I followed the course of a pretty cascade, which fell from an easy descent, and led me to a natural bower of trees, whose branches mingling at the top, formed a lofty arch, and excluded the noon-day's sultry beams. I entered the silent retreat, with as much veneration as if it had been sacred to some invisible power. But how great was my surprise, when I saw the lovely youth reclined on a mossy bank, lost in downy sleep! The verdant couch was canopied over with ivy, twining with honey-suckles.

Never did any thing human appear so beautiful!

as bluſh, like the roſy morning, painted for [illegible] ed to bleſs the golden ſlumber. I gazed for a few moments with the ſame guiltleſs delight as an ethereal being would inſpire, and then ſoftly withdrew.

If he is, as you flatter me, ſome bright inhabitant of the air, the purity of my paſſion is very agreeable to a lover of that kind. It is a harmleſs lambent flame, that plays about my heart, and gives me no manner of uneaſineſs; it is ſuch a ſanctity of affection, as neither interrupts nor profanes my devotion; it has ſomething more than the tenderneſs of friendſhip, and leſs than the warmth and violence of paſſion; and ſeems, like the dictates of guiltleſs nature, to ſoften the fatigues of my new ſtation.

Theſe refinements, Lady Sophia, will, I fear, be a little incredible to you, who are dazzled with the luſtre of a duke's coronet, and have placed your affections on mortal charms.

I am come now to the ſerious part of your letter. I know that religion is the governing principle of your actions: which makes me the more ſurpriſed, that you ſhould perſuade me to put myſelf on the hazard of a ſecond trial. Are you ſure, that neither the flattery nor threatnings of my father will prevail with me to renounce the reformed religion, and perjure myſelf, by giving my vows to a man my ſoul deteſts? Do you think the ſparks of vanity and ambition extinguiſhed in my breaſt? that greatneſs and pleaſure have no charms? or that the tender affection I have for my father will ever be effaced? Oh! Lady Sophia, if you knew the anguiſh it coſt me, to break through theſe ſoft, theſe powerful engagements, you would not perſuade me to quit this peaceful retreat, and put the event on another trial.

Your care for me ſeems confined to this world, whatever becomes of me in the next. Could you meet me again ſhining in the drawing-room, or ſparkling in the ring, it would perhaps content you;

though I never glittered among the ſtars, nor was admitted into the celeſtial aſſemblies. If I hear the muſic of the ſpheres, I ſuppoſe your heart would be at reſt, could I once more hear the tranſporting ſound of ——'s title, and be reſtored to my lofty dignity. And yet the poſſeſſion of theſe privileges never put me in an ecſtaſy; how can I help fancying, Roſalinda has as muſical a ſound as Lady Frances. I never found a ſpell in thoſe Right honourable ſyllables for an aching head, or an heavy heart. My ladyſhip finds as great ſatisfaction in ranking a ſet of delft diſhes on a free-ſtone chimney-piece, as ever I had in diſpoſing my fine China on an Indian cabinet.

A clean cambric cap, and an Holland gown, wrought with natural flowers, is the top of my fineſſy; in which I like my ſelf as well, and think I look as handſome, as when I was dreſſed in brocades and jewels for a birth-night. Indeed, that happy occaſion always gave an alacrity to my thoughts, and carried me through the glorious toil with pleaſure. But I have a mind as eaſy and innocent now, as when burdened with thoſe coſtly ornaments: a red croſs-knot, a glaſs neck-lace, and flowers in my boſom, are the only uſeleſs parts of my dreſs; which is either the gift of nature, or honeſtly paid for; in which I am a thouſand times more happy, than I ſhould be in borrowed finery, at the expence of ſome induſtrious trader's ruin, and that of his whole family.

You find, Lady Sophia, I am very well at eaſe, and enjoy a perfect tranquillity, in this humble ſtation. It was a principle truly rational and divine, that induced me to give up all the ſplendid diſtinctions of my birth, the eaſe and delicacy to which I had been accuſtomed, rather than baſely deny thoſe ſacred truths, to which my ſoul religiouſly aſſented, and whoſe divine articles ſome of my glorious anceſtors have ſealed with their blood.

Inſtead of looking back with regret on my paſt

grandeur, the resignation gives me a taste of celestial joy; the songs of angels could not soothe me with softer harmony, than what results from the secret approbation of my own reason; and while all within is peaceful and serene, whether I am in a palace or cottage, my happiness is secure.

Rosalinda.

LETTER III.

To Lady Sophia from the same.

YOur advice, dear Lady Sophia, is, without question, well meant; but I dare not follow it. My father is so far from relenting, that I have had intelligence since I came here, that he has sworn by all that is holy, unless I will marry count Altamont, and embrace the Romish religion, he will settle his whole estate on some monastery at his decease.

This was what I expected; and I am sure you will not persuade me to renounce heaven, and damn myself, for the sordid purchase of eighty thousand pounds; nor would you considerately advise me, to hazard a celestial advancement for a gilded coronet, or prefer the flattery of mistaken mortals to the approbation of angels. They have been witnesses of my pious vows; and should I violate my faith, and turn apostate to heaven, those ministers of light would bring in their awful evidence, and stand my accusers at the last dreadful tribunal. And can you in earnest think it the effect of wisdom and just reflection, to dare the menaces of divine justice, rather than incur my father's unmerited resentment? Such I must term it, having found his affections entirely alienated before I left him. There is full evidence he was pleased with my flight, and takes no thought of making any inquiry about it.

But Heaven can witness with what reluctance I

have torn myself from the sight of this unnatural parent; what anguish, what pangs of affection, it cost me! This was the most difficult part of my conquest. The delicacy and softness to which I had been inured, the court of birth and quality, reputation and esteem of my friends, I resigned with some degree of fortitude. But here nature, with specious arguments, opposed, and had triumphed in my perdition, unaffisted by the sacred oracles. To them I applied in this perplexity, and received aid from the heavenly illumination. Here I found it by the eternal truth determined, ——*He that loves father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.* I worshipped, and obeyed the celestial dictates.

This was no rash inconsiderate action, but the effect of reason and design. After having counted the cost, I found the odds to be infinite: the damage was momentary, the recompence unlimited and immense.

'Tis done now, the great deciding part;
The world's subdu'd, and Heav'n has all my heart.
Earth's gaudy shews, and pomp of courts, adieu!
For ever now I turn my eyes from you.

What can the world, what can the artifice of men propose, to tempt me to relinquish my choice? What could they lay in the balance against the sovereign good? What could they offer as an equivalent to the favour of the infinite Divinity, whose smiles enlighten the realms of joy, and fill the celestial inhabitants with unutterable ecstasy!——Ask those happy spirits who know what the light of the countenance imports, what should buy one moment's interval of their bliss.——Ask some radiant cherub, amidst his flaming raptures, at what price he values his enjoyment.——And when they have named the purchase, earth and hell may try to balance my glorious expectations.

Pleasure would court in vain, and beauty smile,
Glory at vain my wishes would beguile;
The persecutor's rage I would not fear;
Let death in every horrid form appear,
And with his keenest darts my breast assail;
When breath, and ev'ry vital spring, shall fail,
This sacred flame, on brighter wings shall rise,
And unextinguish'd reach its native skies.

A thousand times blessed be that propitious Power, who, from the plenitude of bliss, and the highest exaltation of glory, descended to low mortality; and, by his own great example and sufferings, animated my breast with this divine fortitude, and marked a way to victory and immortal honour. How sincerely I have followed the heavenly illumination, my witness is within, and my record on high.

My father, I know, is inexorable, and has cut me off from his paternal care, and all the privileges of my birth: but, while I look forward to the bright recompence prepared for suffering virtue, this loss sits lightly on my soul.

But friendship, with a stronger force, detains me. Here my soul is in suspence.——Dear Lady Sophia, how shall I speak my last adieu? I feel the pangs of separation; an anguish beyond all the emphasis of human learning to utter.——Adieu! we must meet no more, till the course of nature is dissolved, and the sun has measured his last radiant circle round the skies.

Rosalinda.

[See the sequel of her story in letter 2. part III.]

LETTER IV.

To Laurinda.

JOIN with me, dear Laurinda, in thanking Heaven, that I am once more returned to the mansion-seat of my forefathers; for had I staid much longer in London, I had certainly left my wits there. Would you believe, that my serious retired temper could find charms in a multitude, or my heart be held captive in a splendid circle of a blue garter! that I, who have been used to view the stars which glittered over my head in a clear night, should be dazzled with the lustre of an embroidered one! and yet all this has befallen me. I was the other day making a visit to Cleomira, when the duke of ——'s chariot, with three laced footmen behind it, stopped at the door. I was at the window, and saw him alight. He is really a handsome man; but his charms were extremely increased by the pomp which surrounded him; the respectful awe with which his attendants approached him, heightened the majesty of his appearance. His legs were formed into the exactest symmetry, by the magnificent clocks of his stockings. The deference which was paid him at his first coming into the room, taught me to look upon him as something above the race of mortals which I had been used to converse with. When I had time to consider his face, I found it received a much greater addition from a fair wig loaded with powder, than it could have done from artless ringlets of the most lovely hair. After he had sat a little, he asked Cleomira to go with him to his house, to see a fine set of hangings, which were just come over from the gobelins. She excused herself, as being obliged to stay and entertain me: but he asked me to be of the party; and as soon as Cleomira's coach was ready, we all went together. But if I was charmed with the sparkling

chariot and [illegible] I was enchanted with the house. The lofty room, the painted ceiling, the gilded wainscot, struck me with a pleasure I had never felt. However, it was an unquiet joy, and I longed to be at home; for I thought myself in a dangerous situation. As soon as Cleomira had set me down at my lodgings, I immediately set about packing up my things, and the very next morning, in the height of my ecstacy, left London, and all its pomp, behind me. But how are either my eyes or every object altered since I have been absent? The house used to appear a handsome ancient building, but now I find it only a Gothic heap of stone; the ceilings are so low that I am afraid of knocking my brains out; and the entry so narrow, that if I should meet any body, I should certainly run back again, for fear of being squeezed against the wall in endeavouring to pass. I want to pull down the venerable pictures of my ancestors, because they were not painted in Italy. The bow-windows terrify me, and must be changed into Venetian ones; for there is no bearing the light which strikes through so unfashionable a piece of Architecture. The rosy daughters of the neighbouring squires are become, in my eyes, awkward figures, and there is something so ungenteel and coarse in such an exuberance of health, that I cannot bear to look at them. The young men of the village appear downright bumpkins; and I cannot perceive any beauty in the cheerful bloom of their countenances, or just proportion of their shape, through the melancholy disguise of unpowdered locks, and plain broad-cloth apparel. If they talk to me, I am amazed how a man has the assurance to open his mouth any where, who has not a right to speak in the house of Peers, and can never comprehend how any thing worth communicating can enter into a head which was never circled with a coronet. Sentences which are uttered by plain Cleon, have no force, though perhaps the same words would

have all the charms of eloquence, if pronounced by an earl.

You see I am not very happy at present in the society of my old acquaintance; but I hope this delicacy will soon wear off, or I shall not be able to behave myself patiently among a set of people, with whom I have formerly spent many happy hours.

Adieu, my dear Laurinda. My politeness will not lessen, but increase the value I set upon your friendship; since I am sure the beau monde would approve me for being unalterably

Yours, &c.

Lavinia.

LETTER V.

The sequel of the story of Sylvia, in the third letter of the first part of Letters Moral and Entertaining, *To Belinda.*

Madam,

YOUR suspicions are too just, of the occasion of my late sickness. I have waited with great impatience for the satisfaction of disclosing the secrets of my soul to you; but my strength would not sooner permit me to give you this proof of my obedience to your commands, and the confidence I have in your fidelity.

Why was I formed with these soft inclinations, this fatal propensity to love? How happy are you, who, amidst the gayest advantages of youth and fortune, can act with such a graceful regularity, and govern your passions with an absolute command, free from those tender emotions which interrupt the felicity of my life.

I spent the last winter in the country with my

father, whose pious instructions, confirmed by his own practice, directed me to a refined and immortal happiness; nor could my invitations from the Comtesse de R——, nor all my brother's importunity, prevail with me to quit a retirement, where I found so much peace, and unmolested tranquility. My criminal passion for Monsieur le Comte—a fermed perfectly extinguished, and gave place to a nobler attachment: heaven had all my vows; thither, with a divine ambition, my soul inspired. This sacred ardour, like incense, mingled with the morning fragrance, and cheered the evening shades; the whispering brooks and sylvan retreats witnessed to the heavenly flame; where, in language like this, I often addressed the invisible, but present Divinity.

"O thou, whom unseen I love! tell me by what "gentle influence thou dost attract my desires. "These eyes have never seen thy lovely face, no "accent of thy voice has reached my ear; and yet "thou art more intimate to my soul than any of "the objects of sense. To thee I tell my inmost "care, and open every grief; while some heavenly "gale dispels the gloom, and breathes eternal peace "and fragrance on my soul.

"Not blessed Arabia, when her spices flow,
"And load the western breezes with their spoils,
"Is half so sweet; nor half so sweet the breath
"Of evening roses, when the dewy morn
"Renews the garden's pride, while the glad sun
"Calls out the blooming life of every flower.

"My wishes fly beyond the bounds of this low "creation and terminate in thee, the spring of fresh "and ever-blooming joys. It is thee, [illegible] "thee, oh uncreated Beauty, that I love! not as a "miser loves his wealth, or the ambitious his grandeur; nor as the libertine loves his pleasure, or "the generous man his friend: these are but [illegible] "[illegible], and would profane the sacred ardour; but

"thou [illegible] the [illegible] thought, and ex-
"plain the secret [illegible] of my soul. [illegible] in-
"most [illegible]; and if thou [illegible] any [illegible]
"titor there, remove the darling vanity, and blot
"every name but thine from my heart."

In this elevation, my dear Belinda, would you not think me secure from [illegible] charms? Could one of your equal temper conceive there and such an easy transition from devotion to love—mere earthly love! Would the most uncharitable person in the world have said, that from this sublime situation I should, in a few moments, quit the sales, and bid the angels farewell!

But such was the event. My brother coming hastily to me into the garden, where I was walking, told me the compte de R—— intended him the honour of a visit, and would be with us the next morning. He left me immediately without observing the consternation I was in, or giving himself any trouble about my pride or vapours.

I knew not what or where I was. The celestial scenes, that had just before engaged my contemplation, vanished; the heavens were no more; paradise, with all its glories, disappeared like a fairy vision; my flight was finished, and I sunk to low mortality again. I asked myself, if I were asleep or awake, in my right senses, or out of my wits? whether I really knew my own name, and was indeed the happy person, that a few minutes before, had looked with indifference, or contempt, on all the gay allurements of the world? In this confusion I stood as if I had been fixed to the place by a spell, till my father sent for me to consult about some family affairs, as he had always done since my mother's death.

The Comte's visit was wholly intended to my brother. They were engaged in the most perfect friendship, founded on resembling [illegible] on equal [illegible] of every kind of view. It was a full year since I had seen him. It is probable he ex-

ver suspected my folly, nor once imagined the cause of my retirement; this greatly encouraged me, and gave me hopes I should conceal my guilty passion.

But I was undeceived the moment the young youth arrived. An innate grandeur gave a dignity to his mien; the splendor of virtue brightened his aspect; there was something in his whole demeanour so benign and engaging, that I found it impossible to resist the soft insinuation; the pleasing delirium entirely possessed me, and I betrayed myself by a thousand inadvertencies. However, I had some pauses of discretion, and started with horror at my own injustice; my soul was full of anxiety, to think how I should bear this inward struggle for the space of eight days, which the Comte intended to stay, the first of which was not yet past.

The summer was now in its pride, and as soon as the evening made walking pleasant, my brother conducted his agreeable guest through a variety of charming walks to an artificial grotto. The top was round and lofty, painted with a beautiful sky, hung with a great number of little crystal sconces formed like stars; in the midst there was placed one larger than the rest, shaped like a crescent. The sides of this fine cavity were rock-work, adorned with branches of coral, mother of pearl, and a great variety of counterfeit gems, sparkling among the well-imitated clefts of marble. It was paved in flowers with a kind of Mosaic work: the seats were shaped like little banks, covered with green velvet instead of moss. In this enchanting retreat a supper was ordered, attended with an exquisite concert of voices, and instruments. Milton's morning-hymn was sung, and several of the solemnest Italian compositions. The whole performance was noble and pathetic, while the gardens and groves around returned a thousand soft melodious echoes.

This grave music was exactly suited to the charming stranger's genius; and yet, through the whole

evening, never did any thing appear so abstract, so lifeless, and so inattentive. As soon as the entertainment was over, and the company withdrawn, (except my brother,) he begged to be excused from staying a week, as he designed, and that he might be suffered to return the next morning, which, after some apologies on both sides, was agreed.

I was so ill in the morning, that it prevented my seeing the Comte; who could not but discover the unhappy conquest he had made, and certainly left us so suddenly, to free me from such a criminal perplexity, or to stifle the same kindling guilt in his own breast. This last was what my brother believed, and thought it as glorious an instance of virtue and friendship, as it was possible for a man in the warmth of youthful passion to give.

Whatever it was, my disorder increased, till it came to a dangerous fever. Death was now in view; my tender cares, and fancied distresses, were lost in a more important concern; the little amusements of the world vanished like dreams; a hovering mist vailed the face of Nature, and darkened all its beauty; nor could any sound of joy cheer the sullen hours. I was on the confines of the grave, entering the habitations of the dead. This prospect had a solemnity in it, beyond whatever I conceived in the hours of health.

Think, vain fond heart, when on the steep
Of that tremendous awful deep,
Eternity, in sad suspense I stood,
How all my trifling hopes and fears,
My senseless joys and idle tears,
Vanish'd at prospect of the frightful flood!

I stood shivering on the brink, looking forward with a dreadful curiosity: all before me was hid in darkness, and impenetrable secrecy: the great experiment was untried, the region of spirits strange and unknown: it was yet a perhaps, an uncertain-

ty, on which my hopes depended: the grand question, whether I should be happy or miserable for ever? was yet undecided: I was startled at a mere possibility of being thus cut off in the flowry spring, and excluded from the illustrious assembly of happy immortals.

Indeed I had no intervals of despair; my hopes and fears were equally balanced. No allowed or unrepented crime pirfled my soul. Virtue had been my early, my deliberate choice, the superior design and governing spring of all my conduct. I hope I had made some preparation for death, and had often meditated on the solemn subject; for it was in the house of grief, sickness and mortality I had never before grounded on a sick bed; these solemnities were new, and infinitely more awful than I had ever conceived.

Death threatened me now at a disadvantage, in the crisis of folly. An exalted disorder of mind, sickness, and pain, gave every thing gloomy object, and heightened even natural frailties into the blackest guilt; while the grisly monarch stood waiting before me, and drew his fable curtains round my bed. But a superior Power rescued me from his ravenous jaws, and bid me live, to speak my great deliverer's praise.

This sickness has given me another set of thoughts. My apprehensions of dying are as different from what they were before, as the evidence of waking certainties are from the airy illusions of a dream. My notions were once very gay and romantic; I fancied I should take my final leave of the world with an exceeding good grace, and bid adieu very sedately to all the vanities beneath the sun. Till it came to a trial, I was for making my exit in the full bloom of youth, and quitting the stage in the most becoming manner. While the fatal moment appeared at a distance, I was delighted with such images of mortality, as the author of the following

verses has described, and with great gaiety repeated these lines:

"Indulgent Death, prepare thy gentle dart,
"To strike a willing and unguarded heart!
"Where are thy dreadful looks, and gloomy train?
"Fantastic mortals all these terrors feign.
"Thou hast an angel's smile, and heav'nly grace
"I find transporting beauties in thy face,
"And yield, unforc'd, unto thy cold embrace.
"I come a joyful captive to thy arms!
"This moment has for me ten thousand charms.
"For thee all human things I here resign;
"My spotless faith and virgin vows are thine.
"Myrtillo's sighs, and Sylvia's tears, in vain
"In these dull regions would my soul retain:
"Forbear your fruitless grief, I go to prove
"Unbounded pleasures, and immortal love.
"Oh! let me, unmolested, close my eyes,
"We'll meet again in yonder blissful skies.
"Young virgins, haste, a flow'ry wreath prepare,
"And dress with guiltless ornaments my hair;
"Adorn me with the summer's painted pride,
"And lay the vestments of the dead aside:
"Nor let a pensive look, or mournful tear,
"To cloud the future of your eyes, appear;
"Each nymph be dress'd in robes of spotless light,
"The folding streaming hair with silver white;
"Let smiles on all your joyful faces shine,
"Nor at my glorious destiny repine:
"With decent joy conduct me to the tomb,
"And hang your garlands round my solitary room."

This is to expire in heroics, to give up the ghost with a poetical decorum, and to be interred *à la mode de Arcadia*. Such sentiments as these may pleasingly amuse the mind in the hours of health and serenity; but it requires a strength superior to all human fortitude to support the soul in the agonies of separation. There the rules of reason and

nature fail! only a Power divine can disperse the fatal gloom, and brighten it into celestial day.

This long letter is owing to your own curiosity, and must be the excuse of,

Madam,

Yours, &c.

Eliza.

LETTER VI.

To Lothario; giving an account of the death of Amanda.

I Am just returned from paying my last ceremony to the remains of the late beautiful Amanda. The surprising state in which for several weeks the corpse lay, the richness of the coffin, or the pomp with which she was interred, could in no way engage from my thoughts the melancholy circumstances that attended the last scene of her life. I never think of the manner of her death, but a thousand terrors rise in my imagination, to reproach me for joining with the rest of her flatterers, in concealing her danger, and flattering her with hopes of recovery, till death convinced her of the fatal delusion.

On this subject I hope you will give me leave to be serious. My youth, which you so often object against the gravity of my temper, is no argument in this case: The late Amanda was still younger, and yet, after all her bloom and vivacity, I saw her a pale and tasteless carcase.

How lately did this celebrated thing
Shine in the box, and sparkle in the ring!

It is true, the mouldering clay, by a stately monument, is distinguished from vulgar dust: but how

poor a consolation is that to an immortal spirit, fated to endless misery, or unbounded joy!

You may laugh, and in poor wild wit ridicule these solemn reflections, and lampoon me with the character of a saint; but, my dear Leticia, this mirth would be more unseasonable and ridiculous than my morals. However, I am more charitable than to accuse you of such levity.

Since you have put me by your own commands, on this melancholy account, I hope it will be for your advantage, when you come to act the closing part of life.

I told you in my last letter, the accidental reason of being in the same house with Amanda, and her full resolution not to go into the country, however necessary it was for her health. No argument could prevail with her to quit the amusements of the town in which she had always a share, till the positive order of her physicians confined her from going abroad. Her distemper was lingering, but incurable; this, in my hearing, the doctor owned to her eldest sister, in whose family she was. He told us, that he thought two or three months would be the utmost limits of her life; which he begged might be concealed, and that we would keep her as cheerful as possible. But the natural gaiety of her temper prevented that care; for her business was to get rid of time and leisure. She could not go to the masquerade, but took care to let her acquaintance know how welcome their appearance in every fantastic disguise, would be in her own apartment. She languished after the delights of the stage; but to supply that, orders were given for some farce or comedy to be read for her diversion. Sometimes a game at piquet passed away the tedious moments: she has often kept the cards in her hands, till a swooning fit interrupted the important affair. This, you will think, was a pious preparation for the last change! a glorious manner of concluding the action of human life!

Her beauty was as much her joy and contemplation as ever. She was exceeding pale; but there was a certain elegance in her features, and something so peculiarly charming in her air, that triumphed over her indisposition; and to give a ruddy to her complexion, she had prevailed with her sister to change her window curtains, which were yellow silk, for some of a bright crimson. Her toilet took up as much of her time as her strength would permit; the adjusting a becoming and modish undress would sometimes so exhaust her spirits, that she was forced to pause, and leave the mighty task unfinished. It was but two days before she died, that she ordered the most fashionable dishabille to be sent for from France; as if she designed to expire genteelly, and appear polite, even in the languishments of death.

Her sister, though many years older, under the influence of the same unhappy education, indulged the vanity of her inclination in every punctilio. Whatever was the consequence, the dying fair must be diverted from every thing that was reasonable and serious. One would wonder her invention could find such a series of impertinencies. Monkeys, parrots, buffoons, soft music, and tender songs, were always ready to entertain every little interval of ease or strength the poor unthinking patient had.

This to me was the most melancholy scene in the world. I have forced a smile, when my heart has been inwardly bleeding with grief and compassion. Not a day past, but, with tears streaming from my eyes, I importuned Marina to let her sister know her danger, and to send for a neighbouring clergyman of great piety, sometimes to pray with her, and, at least, to acquaint her she was not immortal; that it was possible for her to die, as well as other people. This advice she rejected, as positively, as if I had persuaded her to send for an executioner to dispatch her sister into the next world. "Then, Madam,

said I, "at least forbear to distract and hinder her "from every serious reflection."

"Serious reflection! My dear Emilia," she replied, "where have you learned this cant? How "long have you practised this saintly air? Look "into the glass, and see if you can forbear laughing "at yourself. Would you have me put on that pre- "cise look, and murder my sister, by telling her "that she had but a month to live! It would infal- "libly throw her into the agonies of death. You "cannot be so barbarous to give me this advice. "You know what effect our pious fraud had, of "putting St Austin's meditations into her hands, "instead of Otway's plays; the accidental opening "it at a meditation on death, had almost thrown "her into a convulsion. But this," continued she, "is the effect of your strange notions. You repre- "sent the Supreme Being in such a gloomy view, "that it makes you perfectly superstitious. My "thoughts, I confess, are more lightsome and free; "I believe the mercies of Heaven unbounded, and "that there is nothing in these little gaieties offensive "to God, or injurious to man. Nor indeed is a "future state of punishment any part of my creed. "I make no question but my sister will be insensible "or happy whenever she dies, and it shall be my "business to make her so the short space she has to "live, which may be a month or two longer, by "the doctor's conjectures the last visit he made. "Come," added she, "you must go with me, and "endeavour to divert her; but pray put off that "sanctified aspect, and try to look a little more like "an inhabitant of this world."

I could not refuse attending her to Amanda's apartment; whom we found in a musing melancholy posture; which to divert, Marina told her, she looked exceeding well, and nothing could be more genteel than the dishabille in which she appeared. This a little brightened the chagrin on her visage, and made her something attentive to the pranks of a new

monkey, which her page had just introduced to divert his fair mistress; who, in the midst of the recreation, was seized with a fainting fit, sunk back in an easy chair, and after a few hours convulsive pangs, gave up the ghost.

I have been so particular in this account, in hopes it will have a lasting influence on your conduct; and, by being faithful to my living friend, I may atone, if possible, for my insincerity to the dead. I have a thousand and a thousand times reproached myself, for not letting Amanda plainly know her danger, leaving the event to Heaven. I am convinced it was my duty, in spite of all the false rules by which the friendship of this world is guided.

These two sisters had the misfortune, in their early years, to lose their mother, and were left to the conduct of a father, who made it his pride to think and live freely. He looked on all religion as a state policy, and put the Bible and Alcoran on a level. With these principles he perverted his daughters minds; and, except observing the strictest forms of honour and reputation, they were governed by no rule but their caprice, and the fashions of the age. Thus they saw their father live, and thus they saw him die, entirely negligent and thoughtless of any thing beyond the period of human life. Instead of prayers, and pious meditations, one of his libertine companions read Dryden's translation of Lucretius to him, in his last hours; while fearless and insensible he met death, and all its succeeding horrors.

Amanda's death has made a deep impression on my thoughts; I have bid the modish world adieu, and am now retired to my brother's country-seat. You may call it the spleen, but I hope it is the effect of just reasoning, that I have never read any thing since I came hither, but books of devotion. Mr. Law's excellent treatise of Christian perfection has been instructive to me. The character of Mi-

randa has raised a noble emulation in my mind, though I despair of reaching that perfection.

If you make me a visit, you will not find me engaged in cards at one and-thirty, nor telling riddles, or drawing valentines with my country-neighbours; but musing by the side of a gentle cascade, or sitting in some fragrant bower, listening to the songs of heaven in Dr Watt's pious numbers.

"Hark! how beyond the narrow bounds
"Of time and space they run,
"And speak in most majestic sounds
"The Godhead of the Son;

"How on the Father's breast he lay
"The darling of his soul,
"Infinite years before the day
"Or heav'ns began to roll.

"And now they sink their lofty tone,
"And milder notes they play;
"And bring th' eternal Godhead down,
"To dwell in humble clay."

If this long letter should give you the spleen, I hope it will be your advantage. Nothing but that is the intention of,

Madam,

Your most humble servant,

Emilia

LETTER VII.

The answer to Emilia.

YOUR letter, I hope, will be a restraint on the great levity of my temper. The account of Amanda's death will leave me without excuse, if I

should carry my vanity so far, as to call the last part of life with so little propriety. I cannot, without the warmest gratitude to Heaven, reflect on the advantage of a different education and principles, which I hope will never be effaced from my soul.

But, my dear Emilia, I shall never be so good as you would have me, nor as I sincerely desire to be. I have yet some tender engagements to break, before I bid adieu to the world, and rank myself in the number of departed spirits. I cannot on a sudden contract such intimacies with invisible beings, as to abandon all my material acquaintance. I despair of following you and Miranda, who, if you were Roman Catholics, are in a fair way of being canonized, as many a miserable sinner has been before you. Of whatever religion I am, it is certain, I shall never be numbered in the same class with St Winefrid.

You love poetry, and it is a pleasure to me to oblige you with any thing writ on a subject so agreeable to your taste, as these verses inscribed to Mrs M——; a person of strict piety, though she does not turn recluse, and live in a grotto; but converses freely with the polite world, and keeps an unblemished character in it. I will leave you now to your shady retreats, and murmuring brooks.

On SOLITUDE.

Inscribed to Mrs ——.

YE groves, and flow'ry vales, in you we find
The first unblemish'd joys for man design'd;
Your charming scenes th' attentive mind supply
With pleasure in its nice variety.
Nature does here her virgin-smiles afford,
And shews us paradise again restor'd;
Our souls their former harmony acquire,
And vexing care, and cumbrous guilt retire.

Propitious Solitude, thou kind retreat
From all the vain amusements of the great!
In thee alone, without disgust, we prove
The endless sweets of innocence and love.
Beauty and wit may find a refuge here;
Unenvy'd even Belinda might appear;
Each nymph would yield the uncontested prize,
And every swain pay homage to her eyes.
Flourish, ye gentle shades, and rural seats,
Let endless verdure deck your soft retreats;
Peace dwell upon your banks, ye silver streams,
The muses chaste delights, and constant themes!
For ever you the poets breast inspire
With sprightly joys, and wake the golden lyre.
Retir'd in fragrant bowers, the Hebrew king
For Pharaoh's daughter touch'd the tuneful string;
The fair Egyptian's charms his soul possess'd,
And fill'd with sacred ecstasies his breast;
Celestial numbers melted from his tongue,
In human figures truths divine were sung;
While Lebanon's high cedars lent an ear,
And Siloe rose above its banks to hear;
Hermon and Carmel kept the pleasing lay,
And Sharon's painted vale appear'd more gay.
What pow'r, inchanting Solitude, is thine!
That men, for thee the dearest ties resign?
For thee the monarch lays his crown aside,
And the young lover quits his weeping bride;
The hero gives the chace of honour o'er,
And fame, and glorious conquest, tempt no more;
The softer sex, with fearless piety,
To woods and savage wilds have follow'd thee.
Fair Magdalen the flatt'ring world declin'd,
And to a narrow cave her charms confin'd.
In Herod's wanton court admir'd she shone,
And all the tempting paths of vice had known;
To hers, the beauties of the Hebrew race,
Rachel and Tamar's boasted fame, gave place;
Love triumph'd in her voice, her looks, and mien,
And love in all her fatal form was seen;

A thouſand youthful hearts her pow'r obey'd,
And homage to her ſoft dominion paid.
But this in nature's gayeſt bloom admir'd,
A penitent ſhe glorioufly retir'd;
Her coſtly ornaments are laid aſide,
With all the vain addreſs of female pride:
Her hair neglected, o'er her boſom flow'd,
And charms beyond the reach of art beſtow'd;
A mourning robe ſhe wore, a penſive grace,
And ſoft remorſe ſat on her lovely face;
A vaulted rock for her retreat ſhe choſe,
Among the cliffs a murm'ring fountain roſe.
Her contemplation, pray'r, and lofty praiſe,
In ſolemn order, meaſur'd out her days:
To heav'n her vows with early ardour fled,
Before the ſun his morning-glories ſpread;
When from his height he pour'd down golden ſtreams,
Her wing'd devotion met his noon-day beams;
'Till in the weſt with fainter light he ſhone,
Untir'd the heav'nly votary went on:
The moon ſerene in midnight-ſplendor ſat,
With countleſs ſtars attending on her ſtate;
The cares and noiſy buſineſs of the day,
In reſt, and ſoothing dreams, diſſolv'd away;
The drowſy waters crept along the ſhore,
And ſhepherds pin'd upon the banks no more;
The trees their whiſpers ceas'd, the gentle gale
No longer danc'd along the dewy vale;
The peaceful echoes, undiſturb'd with ſound,
Lay ſlumb'ring in the cavern'd hills around:
Faction, and care, and midnight riot ſlept;
But ſtill the lovely ſaint her holy vigils kept.

If you could but find ſuch a convenient habitation as this, it would be to your heart's content. For my part, I ſhall never hide my virtue in obſcurity; it ſhall not be my fault, if the world is not inſtructed by my example. But, to be ſerious, I verily believe we have both the ſame important in-

tereſts in view, though we are ſo different in our tempers. We never meet, but it puts me in mind of the two weeping and laughing philoſophers. The very ſame cauſe has often had the oppoſite effect on our diſpoſitions; but, in ſpite of this ſeeming contradiction, that ſacred amity by which we are united, ſhall never be violated by,

Madam,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant.

Leticia.

LETTER VIII.

To Leticia, in anſwer to the foregoing letter.

IF you have heard of my brother's death, you can be no ſtranger to the exceſs of my grief. The poem you ſent came very ſeaſonably. In the Fair Penitent I found a plan of life ſuited to my melancholy temper; which has found more relief by a ſort of viſionary conſolation, than from all the efforts of reaſon. You have often thought fit to divert me with your ſleeping as well as waking reveries; and I know I cannot oblige you more than by relating this uncommon dream.

Whether it was the excurſion of fancy, or whether the ſcene was diſpoſed by an angel, I cannot determine. But as I was ſitting in a ſummer-houſe, my uſual retreat in an afternoon, reading Milton's elegy on Lycidas, a downy ſlumber cloſed my eyes, and ſunk my ſorrows in the pleaſing oblivion.

I found myſelf in a place gay as the poet's deſcription of the Cyprian groves. Beneath an inviting ſhade I reſted on a bank of violets, and, without ſurpriſe, ſaw my brother in a glittering habit, and beautiful beyond the race of men, approaching.

He ſeated himſelf by me, and with a ſmile of celeſtial charity thus began:

"It is with the higheſt ſatisfaction, my dear ſiſter, "I come to give you a relation that will animate "your virtue, as you aſſiſted mine in a ſtate of mor- "tal imperfection. You know I had ſome inter- "vals of doubt, and nature ſhrunk at the entrance "of the gloomy valley; the darkneſs was untried "and impenetrable. But how great was my ſur- "priſe, when I found this momentary night ſuc- "ceeded by an eternal noon! while my guardian "angel, with an aſpect of ineffable ſweetneſs, bid "me follow him.

"I obeyed. In an inſtant the earth was loſt to "my view, the ſun diminiſhed to a ſtar; innumer- "able worlds were paſt, with a ſpeed ſwifter than "a morning ray; the gates of heaven now appear- "ed, and at the angel's command rolled back on "their golden hinges. But what glories were diſ- "cloſed, no language on earth can deſcribe! Om- "nipotence and infinite wiſdom ſeemed without li- "mits here to have been exerted. Through inchant- "ing groves, I traced the delicious borders, where "the fountains of life pour out their ſtreams. Paſſing "from one ſcene of wonders to another, ardent to pay "my homage, I preſſed forward to the ſacred throne.

"The ſupreme benignity at once beamed forth "on me. Loſt in ecſtaſy, I fell proſtrate before my "Sovereign; when, with accents that breathed im- "mortal joy and harmony, he bid me riſe to per- "fect purity and bliſs.

"A ſtarry tiara was placed on my head, and a "golden lute in my hand. I mingled with the "grand aſſembly, ten thouſand times ten thouſand, "ranſomed from every language and tribe on earth. "With them I joined my grateful tribute to the "great Benefactor of mankind, whoſe ſufferings "and death had given me acceptance, victory, and "life. I rejoiced in God my Saviour; I triumphed "in the height of his exaltation; infinite majeſty,

"ſoftened by equal love, appeared in his form, the "brightneſs of the Divinity, the joy of heaven, the "theme of every celeſtial ſong.

"I have made this impreſſion on your ſleeping "imagination, being permitted to give you no o-"ther account of my happineſs. Be not impatient "of the afflictions of life. The whole of your "mortal duration is but a moment, to the future "recompence. If you live to the honour of your "Maker, and the advantage of your companions on "earth, it will for ever heighten the tranſports of "your joy in the realms of light."

Here, with ſoft melody, the pleaſing ſcene va-niſhed. I waked at the imaginary muſic, and found it had left a calm and ſedate compoſure in my ſoul. Like a beam from heaven it diſperſed the gloom, and opened a ſerene and lightſome proſpect before me.

——— Ye dreary waſtes, adieu!
Reaſon, religion, now I follow you.
Enough to nature and the grave are paid;
Behold, the fair celeſtial ſcene's diſplay'd.

It appeared too regular for a natural excurſion of fancy; but I ſhall leave that undetermined. Amidſt all your gaieties, you are as guiltleſs of incredulity as

Your humble ſervant

Emilia.

LETTER IX.

The anſwer to Emilia.

I Am not ſurpriſed, that ſuch a ſhining viſion as you have deſcribed, has allayed your grief, and reſtored the tranquillity of your mind; but I am afraid you are not yet gay enough, to excuſe the vivacity of my temper, or ſuffer me to laugh. It

is without your consent if I am happy, and very much pleased with any of the transitory vanities of this world; which, I must own, have some prevailing charms for me, from whose soft captivity I cannot yet get free.

I was last night at a play, in which there was the part of a princess well acted, and the sentiments belonging to the character were just and noble; yet I was not half so well pleased, as I had often been before with the same representation. I soon found the reason of my dissatisfaction, and the difference between imitated and real greatness —— The Princess-Royal was at the play, and just in my view. All that elegance and dignity of thought the poet had described, brightened her aspect; every virtue was there conspicuous; the gentle, the engaging smile, was beyond the reach of numbers: a thousand nameless graces discovered the innate perfections of her mind, and gave the charming Princess a distinction peculiar to conscious merit, and beyond all imitation.

I intend you a visit before the spring (that fairest season of the year) is past. I am willing to see you once more in this world; for I am not sure we shall meet in the next, though I sincerely desire it. Nothing will more contribute to my happiness than your conversation: I catch some emanation of your virtue, and am inspired with new convictions of the vanity of the word; my reason gains ground, and my passions subside. I may venture to look grave in your company; but in my present modish way of life, I dare not so much as put on an air of thought and reflection, nor seem to have any thing in the earth to do, but to amuse myself, and the volatile beings I converse with. You see, if I was wiser than I really am, I should take pains to conceal it, rather than be singular and unfashionable.

I have sent the verses I promised to procure for you.

On BEAUTY.

VIctorious Beauty! by what potent charm
Doſt thou the ſoul of all its force diſarm!
We bleſs our chains, abhor our liberty,
And yield the uncontested prize to thee.
Whether we raſh or calm deſigns purſue,
Thine is the glorious motive ſtill in view.
For thee we ſearch the wide creation round,
But thou art no where in perfection found;
Some blemiſh ſtill remains on mortal pride,
And crowding years its airy boaſts deride.
Triumphant beauty ſits in Flavia's eyes;
But while we gaze, the trembling luſtre dies!
Bellair's completely form'd with ev'ry grace,
A faultleſs ſhape, and an inchanting face;
In all his motions, each becoming air,
Greatneſs and native elegance appear;
Careleſs and free, in life's deluding bloom,
While envious death threatens a haſty doom,
Some gentle miſtreſs, full of love and truth,
Shall ſoon lament the dear unrival'd youth.
Thou lovely, fleeting, tranſitory thing,
From what immenſe perfection doſt thou ſpring!
To what complete original return,
While we thy ſhort appearance vainly mourn!
Howe'er our doating thoughts miſtake the way
To certain bliſs, thine is a friendly ray
That points the paſſage to unclouded day.
Ye heavenly forms, in all your pomp appear,
And ſhew us what immortal beauties are,
What life, what roſy bloom your faces wear?
Put on each ſmiling grace, and conqu'ring charm,
And all the force of mortal love diſarm,
For ſtill our reſtleſs thoughts take glorious aims,
Howe'er ſeduc'd by theſe inferior flames;
The leading paſſion, the ſupreme deſire,
To things divine and infinite aſpire.

Eternal Excellence! 'tis only thee
We search, through nature's bright variety!
Our eager wishes, with impetuous force,
To thee, unknown, direct their endless course.
'Tis thee we seek and love, for thee we pine;
The pow'rful charm, the soft attraction's thine;
To thee these sighs, these tender vows ascend,
Th' unseen Divinity we still attend;
Sick of these fading toys, our thoughts press on
To joys untasted, excellence unknown.
Thou great Original of all that's fair,
Whose glories no similitude can bear,
Before the darting splendor of thy eyes,
The pride of all created beauty dies!

This I hope is the latent sense of my soul, in all its motions, though I am not yet so wise as you would have me, nor as I intend to be. But in whatever character you put me, do me the justice to believe I am sincerely

Yours, *&c.*

Leticia.

LETTER X.

From Lysander, giving a relation of the tragical end of his valet de chambre.

My Lord,

YOUR commands shall be punctually obeyed, whatever reluctance I find to enter on this relation, of which you have been so imperfectly informed.

The young valet de chambre, whose story you inquire after, was the same I brought out of France, whom you took some notice of when I met your Lordship in my return to England; where I was received again into my mother's family, my father being in my absence deceased.

I had a young ſiſter about fifteen, of whom I was always exceeding fond; and now thought it my part to ſee her as advantageouſly married as her birth and fortune required. After I had ſpent ſome time at home, I propoſed ſeveral good matches for her; every one of which ſhe obſtinately refuſed.

This gave me ſome ſuſpicion of my valet, who appeared to be a handſome youth about eighteen. He had a charming voice, and ſung to a lute, which he touched with ſurpriſing ſkill and ſweetneſs. My ſiſter loved muſic, and he was always ambitious of entertaining her. There was no difficulty to diſcover her inclinations; truth and nature appeared in all her actions. But Palanty's conduct was paſt my penetration. However, I reſolved to part with him to prevent my ſiſter's infamy. As diſſolute and abandoned as my own manners had been, I had the niceſt ſenſe of what would touch her reputation. With a reſtleſs mind I was one day walking in my garden, and, turning with ſome precipitation down a ſhady alley, I ſurprized Palanty reading a paper; which, ſuddenly ſnatching from him, convinced me of my ſiſter's folly.

I took the opportunity immediately to diſmiſs him; and ſeeing me reſolved, he fell on his knees, intreating me not to expoſe a ſtranger in a foreign country; confeſſing the whole truth, that ſhe was an unhappy woman, the Cardinal of B——'s niece, who, governed by the dictates of her affection, had followed me in that diſguiſe.

This ſhe told me with a face unſtained with a roſy bluſh, or the leaſt appearance of that modeſt diſorder ſo natural and becoming her ſex. My confuſion was much greater than hers; and yet one would not think me over-baſhful, nor extremely ſcrupulous, with regard to my character. Her impudence made me almoſt ſuſpect the truth of what ſhe told me: but I was not in an inquiſitive humour, and cared not what ſhe was if I had never been embarraſſed with her. I had ſeen her face too often to

find any charm of novelty in it. The paſſion ſhe pretended for me was a myſtery, when I remembered ſhe had been without conſtraint a witneſs, as well as a pimp, to many of my criminal amours.

However, as I was now without anxiety for my ſiſter, this artful woman, by her importunities, prevailed on my eaſy temper to let her ſtay in the family till ſhe could find ſome other ſettlement. She ſtaid; and, in ſome moment of darkneſs, ſeduced me to her ruin, and my own infamy. She was with child; I got lodgings for her, and, pretending ſome diſguſt, diſmiſſed her as a valet; my mother and ſiſter being entirely ignorant of the diſguiſe of her ſex.

In the mean time, my mother, who took the chagrin of my temper for a reformation of manners, was very ſolicitous with me to conclude a marriage ſhe had propoſed to a young woman of great merit, and a very agreeable perſon. I purſued the affair but coldly, and in mere complaiſance to a moſt indulgent parent; till, by frequent converſation with this charming woman, ſhe engaged me by all the ties of reaſon and virtuous love. The modeſty of her behaviour, joined to the moſt ſincere and obliging temper in the world, ſecured her empire. Her wit was ſparkling and inoffenſive; deceit and malice were ſtrangers to her breaſt: a thouſand nameleſs beauties appeared in all her conduct. Till now I never knew the force of love, nor any of the refined ſentiments that noble paſſion inſpires. In what guiltleſs joys did the hours paſs that I ſpent with my lovely Cimene.

But what tongue can expreſs the anguiſh I felt from my criminal affair with Palanty! I was forced to viſit her, for fear ſhe ſhould divulge the ſecret, in revenge, and ruin me with the charming Cimene. You are a ſtranger, my Lord, to theſe vexations; your whole conduct has been governed by the rules of honour and reaſon. Oh, may my worſt enemy never know the curſe of an engagement with a lewd,

imperious woman! Fear kept me a ſlave to her caprice, and forced me to endure all the inſolence and rage of language ſhe had practiſed in her maſculine habit among her inferiors; nor durſt I offer to controul her expenſive vanity, being willing to ſoften her, till ſhe was paſt the dangerous ſtate ſhe was now in.

But no conſideration could make me delay my intended marriage, let the event be what it would. The day was ſet that Heaven, in Cimene, gave me the greateſt bleſſing of my life. The news was ſoon ſpread, and reached Palanty's ears: who procured a deadly ſleeping draught, and, unſuſpected by thoſe about her, deſperately ſwallowed it, and ſlept her laſt; leaving a paper on her toilet, with an account who ſhe was, and her adventure with me.

This accident was ſoon told to my mother; who was loſt in ſorrow, till I aſſured her Palanty had impoſed on my ignorance by her habit untill a few months before I diſmiſſed her; and that by her artifice, and not my own inclination, I had been inſnared into this misfortune. As much a rake as I had been, I could not but have a ſecret averſion to a woman of that diſſolute character. But the infamy of this tragical event has juſtly fallen on me, ſince in all my other intrigues I had been the ſeducer, and too often triumphed in the ſpoils of unguarded innocence.

The lovely Cimene, to whom I had been but two days married, inſtead of betraying any female weakneſs, with peace in her looks, and perſuaſion in her tongue, endeavoured to compoſe the grief and diſtraction with which ſhe found this infamous event had filled my thoughts. In her calm and unruffled temper I ſaw the privilege of a ſpotleſs life, and a mind unclouded with guilt, free from uneaſy reflections on what was paſt, or reſtleſs expectations of what was to come.

This is juſt the reverſe of my condition. The

unhappy end of this miſerable woman, the double murder of herſelf and unborn infant, the ſhare I have had in her misfortunes, has brought my former crimes in their blackeſt ſhape to my remembrance.

'Tis conſcious guilt's the emphaſis of hell,
Were all but fables, elſe, the prieſthood tell.

Like furies, the ghoſts of my paſt ſins ſtart up, and terrify my reſtleſs imagination; my debauches, quarrels, licentious amours, paſs in a confuſed ſucceſſion before me. This is what ſecretly blaſts my joys, when, to the world, they appear in their full bloom.

It is not a month ſince my ſofteſt wiſhes were crowned in the poſſeſſion of the charming Cimene; I am yet ſurrounded with the congratulations of my friends on the happy occaſion; every other circumſtance of life ſeems to conſpire to my ſatisfaction. You will aſk me, my Lord, why I am not eaſy and thankful in this circle of earthly enjoyments? What is the hinderance? Where is the obſtacle?

It is guilt; it is conſcious guilt! What was the matter with the firſt bold tranſgreſſor? Why did he run to the thickets to cover him? Why ſhelter himſelf among the trees of Eden? What could make him fly that gracious preſence, at which innocent nature ſmiled, the new creation bloomed afreſh, and the morning-ſtars rejoiced? Why is he fearful in the cool of the evening, who, at the dawning of the ſame day, knew no ſuch paſſion? What has made this ſudden alteration? Some mighty change muſt be within, for all without is the ſame. Is he not in paradiſe, ſurrounded with all the pleaſures of ſenſe? The warbling muſic of the groves delights his ear; to charm his ſight, the gay creation unfolds its various beauties; the flowers breathe ambroſial fragrance to cheer him; the balmy air is yet unruffled by tempeſts, the ſun ſhines in its original ſplendor, and nature ſtands dreſſed in all

her primæval perfection! The man is, in exact temperament, formed for immortality, and juſt warm from his great Creator's hands; from whom, with wild amazement, now he flies, and ſeeks the covert of the woods for ſhelter.

This was all the effect of guilt, that ſecret wound that bleeds within! You will excuſe my dwelling ſo long on this melancholy theme, when I tell you it is ſome relief to that anguiſh which is a ſecret to all the world but your Lordſhip. I am well acquainted with your compaſſion and fidelity; and am going to make a farther trial of them, by a relation which will ſurpriſe you. I will not exact your belief, nor enter into the reaſon and philoſophy of it; nor will I preſume to contradict it, ſhould you tell me I am diſtracted, that all I am going to diſcover is the effect of frenzy. As it was but a momentary appearance, I will aſſert nothing. But as I was indulging my melancholy temper, in the retreat of a ſummer-houſe, ſitting very late in a penſive poſture, leaning on a table, a pale ſulphureous gleam of light appeared, that ſeemed to hover round a form reſembling Palanty's; who, with a rueful aſpect, dreſſed in the habiliments of the dead, ſtood before me, and, with an air of unutterable anguiſh, laid this letter on the table by me, and immediately vaniſhed, I ſhould think this no more than a dream, if the paper had not been real. The dreadful contents are as follows:

To Lyſander.

"I AM now convinced, by a terrible demonſtration, of thoſe truths I once denied. To my coſt I find, that hell is no poetic fiction, no enthuſiaſtic dream, nor pious fable of ſome mercenary prieſt. This was the language of my impiety, when I followed you in an impudent diſguiſe; and, to ſupport my maſculine character, acted the Atheiſt, by ridiculing all that was ſacred, till I was gi-

" ven up of Heaven to the ſtrongeſt deluſion, and " the moſt daring infidelity.

" Thus abandoned, I ſwallowed the deadly po- " tion, with a full preſumption of mingling with " my native duſt, and being inſenſible for ever. " But the inſtant Death had cloſed my eyes, and " laid his icy hand on my heart, a ſcene altogether " new and ſurpriſing opened before me. The juſt " unembodied ſoul, in the height of aſtoniſhment, " would fain have ſhrunk back again into its late " warm habitation, from whence I had violently " forced it. The attempt was vain; the avenues " of mortal life were for ever ſhut, and I found my- " ſelf the deriſion of thoſe malignant ſpirits, who " had been my ſeducers to this unnatural fact.

" What execrations did I not utter againſt my- " ſelf and them! I had indulged the rage, and prac- " tiſed the language of hell in my mortal ſtate; but " here all was fruitleſs and unfeared; I was the " captive of thoſe infernal miniſters, who waited to " conduct me to the frontiers of eternal night. I " caſt my eyes to the heavenly luminaries, and the " full blazing ſun, whoſe light I was to loſe for " ever; I bid adieu to the fair creation, whoſe al- " mighty Former I had denied; I caſt my eyes to " the ſparkling gates of bliſs, and, with infinite an- " guiſh, found them ſhut againſt me; and hurried " far thro' chaos and primæval darkneſs, (far from " the limits of celeſtial day,) I reached my deſti- " ned habitation; a diſmal region, waſte and wide, " of which no mortal can form a conception, nor " find a name for half its terrors.

" Oh! fly the paths that lead to theſe mournful " abodes. As I have been, in my mortal ſtate, the " inſtrument of hell to entice you to ſin, your per- " dition would vaſtly aggravate my own miſery; " and I am ſuffered to warn you, as the rich liber- " tine in the goſpel would have warned his bre- " thren, that you come not to this place of tor- " ment.

" I muſt no farther reveal the ſecrets of the deep;
" but am commanded back to the ſeats of impene-
" trable night, and endleſs deſpair!"

Palanty.

That this lettter was left on the table, writ in a character exactly like Palanty's, is fact. Whether the reſt was real or imaginary, I dare not decide.

Your Lordſhip's, &c.

Lyſander.

LETTER XI.

Letter the ſecond, To my Lord————, from Lyſander.

My Lord,

YOU are entirely at your liberty to reject the relation I ſent you. I never intended to make your belief in ghoſts and apparitions a teſt of your Chriſtianity. That ſtands on a more ſure foundation, and has all the evidence of reaſon and miracles to ſupport it. I am an inſtance of its divine power, by which I am transformed from the brutal to the human nature. I can now glory in that privilege I lately deſpiſed, and, without vanity, claim the dignity of a reaſonable creature.

My penitence was ſincere, and found acceptance from Heaven. The ſacred illumination ſcattered the gloom of guilt and deſpair, while in gentle whiſpers the Eternal Spirit breathed pardon, peace, and heavenly benedictions to my ſoul; I felt the powerful influence, the flames of celeſtial love were kindled, my fears vaniſhed like clouds before the morning ſun.

" All hail," I cried, " ye unknown delights, ye
" unexperienced pleaſures! Compared to you, what
" are my paſt enjoyments! What are all the amuſe-
" ments of ſenſe! I never lived till now; I knew

" no more than the name, the ſhadow of happi-
" neſs; but now I wake to life, and taſte the joys
" of angels."

I hope, my Lord, you will not think theſe the flights of imagination. You that have always believed the articles of religion, and kept its bright rewards in view, can reflect on ſuch ſubjects more calmly; but to me theſe glorious truths are all novelty and ſurpriſe. If a wretch from his infancy had been kept in a gloomy dungeon, and juſt delivered from the dark confinement, with what tranſports would he ſalute the great luminaries of heaven while one that from his birth had been bleſſed with their beams would meet them without emotion?

Theſe important ſubjects engage my whole attention; the creation wears new beauties; wherever I caſt my eyes, I meet impreſſions of the Divinity; I trace his footſteps among the ſilver rills, and invoke him in the ſilent grove. You know my poetic humour by too many looſe compoſures; but my muſe is now conſecrated, and in ſome ſylvan retreat often aſſiſts my evening devotion. Permit me, my Lord, to repeat my laſt invocation to the heavenly Pow'r.

Deſcend, celeſtial Spirit, from above,
The uncreated ſource of light and love!
Perpetual calms, and ſweet ſecurity,
Concord, and graceful order, wait on thee;
Decay, and death, thy quick'ning rays exclude,
And ſpringing nature ſmiles, by thee renew'd;
Darkneſs, and wild confuſion ſoon retire
Before thy clear illuminating fire;
To gentle thoughts thou doſt our boſoms move,
And breath'ſt the ſoft melodious ſoul of love.
O thou who mad'ſt the new creation bloom
With active life, and quick'ning virtue come!
Come, like the ſilent fall of evening-dews,
Whoſe moiſture all the flow'ry field renews;
Breathe on me like the ſweet Sabean gale,
That fans with roſy wings the verdant dale;

Smooth as the gliding muſic, that controuls
Each human care, and ſteals upon our ſouls;
In triumph with the heav'nly train deſcend
Of loves and graces, which on thee attend.
In ſilent ſhades, by ſome clear fountain's fall,
Thou oft haſt anſwer'd to a mortal's call;
Oft in ſome artleſs cave, or humble cell,
Thou with the ſons of men haſt deign'd to dwell,
And left behind the high celeſtial ſeats,
To viſit mortals, in their low retreats.
When holy vows thy kind deſcent invite,
Thou hear'ſt the gentle whiſpers with delight;
While Nature tir'd her midnight-ſabbath keeps,
And ev'ry thought, but pure devotion, ſleeps:
The ſmiling ſtars roll on, the dazzling moon
In pomp advances to her ſilent noon;
While thy ſweet voice, ſoft as the midnight-air,
Diſpels the gloom of ev'ry earthly care,
Unfolding boundleſs proſpects of delight,
Before the piercing, intellectual ſight.

Beneath the ſacred mount, by thee inſpir'd
The Hebrews glorious leader ſat retir'd;
The new made world, and Eden's blooming pride,
In various ſcenes before him lay deſcry'd.

O princely ſwain, how didſt thou then deſpiſe
Th' Egyptian court, how worthleſs in thy eyes!
What were the grandeurs of that royal ſeat,
To the diſtinctions of thy preſent ſtate!
While paradiſe, in all its charming views,
For thee, the great creating voice renews;
For thee, again, the morning ſtars rejoice;
Again, for thee they raiſe the tuneful voice:
The ſons of God touch the melodious lyre,
And all the wide creation join the choir.

Lead me, propitious Spirit, lead me far,
Where I no more the voice of man may hear:
You charming viſions how you fire my ſoul,
And ev'ry thought of earthly things controul!
Thro' what enchanting paths, what flow'ry ways,
My fancy led, with boundleſs freedom ſtrays!

Reveal'd the avenues of pleaſure lye,
And open wide the chryſtal portals fly;
Immortal beauty ſmiles, angelic powers,
In ſoft reſponſes, ſing from roſy bowers.

You will not blame me, being got here, if I have no inclination to deſcend. But mortality will prevail. I ſink to my native element again; where, as long as I am confined, believe me to be

Your Lordſhip's

Moſt obliged humble ſervant,

Lyſander.

LETTER XII.

The ſequel of the ſtory of Roſella, in the laſt letter of the firſt part of Letters Moral and Entertaining.

WHEN I was in the weſt, four years ſince, I wrote you word, that I had made an acquaintance in a family who lived in a little retirement, at the foot of a hill, a few miles from my houſe. I then gave you an account of the piety and beauty of thoſe exemplary recluſes; and owned, that I had not at that time forgot the charms of Meliſſa: but I did not tell you, that they had made an impreſſion on me, which could never be eraſed by all the modiſh ſchemes of intereſt and alliances. Nor could that darling (but miſtaken) notion of liberty hold me out againſt the deſire I had to call her mine, and make her ſo by the ſtrongeſt and happieſt ties, thoſe of marriage. I ſtruggled with my own heart, and would fain have terrified it by the laugh I ſhould raiſe among my acquaintance, when they heard that I, in the gayeſt bloom of life, and with four thouſand pounds a-year at my command, ſhould leave

all the fashionable maxims of mankind, and fall in love with a young woman, who had only beauty, and the sanctity of her manners, to recommend her. For though her birth is noble, she has only three thousand pounds, which I design to present to Honoria her mother, the day after our marriage; which will be solemnized as soon as my lawyer can finish a deed, by which I give Melissa a thousand pounds a-year rent-charge for her life, in case she should survive me.

Now I have told you my happiness, I cannot help making you acquainted with Rosella's; whose story, you often said, touched you. I went to the house of Honoria the day after I came hither, (for now it was my only business;) as soon as I alighted, a clean footman, in a frock turned up with green, took my horse. I expected from this to find an alteration in the family; for when I was there first, they had no livery-servant. As soon as I came into the hall, I saw a beautiful young man, whose dress was entirely plain; his hair hung in natural curls without any powder, and his air and appearance seemed to suit with the simplicity and elegance of the other inhabitants of that happy dwelling. Rosella was sitting by a table, and had a boy of about fourteen months old in her lap, rosy and smiling as a cherubim, who was playing with some flowers with which Melissa was going to dress a bason. Rosella immediately rose; and, coming towards me, desired I would give her leave to present her husband Alonzo to me. I was rejoiced at the sound, and congratulated her upon the change of her fortune, in a manner that might convince her how sincerely I shared in all that related to her. The lovely Melissa seemed glad to see me, and ran to call Honoria with an obliging haste. After a few compliments were over, I inquired what had produced the alteration I saw. Honoria told me, that about two years and a half ago, Alonzo's father fell dangerously ill, and that he expressed an ardent desire

to ſee his ſon: upon which his wife wrote to a nephew ſhe had in London, (who was the moſt intimate friend Alonzo had upon earth,) in hopes that he might poſſibly be acquainted with the place of his retreat; and begged of him, if he knew how to direct a letter, that he would write, and deſire him to come and ſee his dying father. The nephew immediately diſpatched an expreſs to Alonzo, who was retired into a little village in Lancaſhire, where he boarded in the houſe of an old clergyman, who had no other family than himſelf and his wife, and who were glad to have Alonzo with them, as he appeared a modeſt, ſober young man; for their circumſtances were too plentiful to want the advantage of a boarder. He immediately left the old people, and came home about four days before the death of his father, who was tranſported at the ſight of him, nor did he feel leſs joy, when his mother aſſured him, that Montanor (for that was his father's name) had for many months before his illneſs, lived a very penitent regular life.

As ſoon as I heard of Alonzo's return, I wrote him a letter, in which I deſired to ſee him as ſoon as Montanor's funeral was over, but forbade him to come till that time. He complied with me in that requeſt, as he has ever ſince done, in all that I deſired of him. About ſix weeks after, Roſella and he were married. I begged him to let me enjoy the company of my daughter while I lived in this ſolitary habitation; for I could not think of leaving it; and we have paſſed our time ever ſince in the moſt perfect harmony. I cannot deny him the juſtice of acknowledging to his face, that we are not only happier in our retirement than we were before, by the addition of a cheerful companion, but edified and improved by the piety of his life. Alonzo ſeemed out of countenance at this part of her diſcourſe; and the modeſty with which he received it, ſhowed how much he deſerved the praiſe ſhe gave him. She continued to tell me, that about four

months after he married Roſella, he received a letter from the lawyer in the village where he had boarded, to let him know, that a few weeks ago the clergyman with whom he had lived, had buried his wife, and about a fortnight after fell himſelf ill of the ſame fever, and died; that he had by his will left Alonzo his eſtate, which was about a hundred and eighty pounds a-year, and two thouſand pounds in money; which added to about two hundred and fifty pounds a-year, and ſome money which his father left him, makes their fortune very eaſy.

Here Honoria ended her diſcourſe; and it was ſo late, that they deſired me to ſtay dinner. After which I aſked to ſpeak with her alone, and told her, I begged I might have leave to propoſe myſelf to Meliſſa, if her heart was not already engaged. Honoria aſſured me it was not, and ſeemed ſurpriſed at a propoſal ſo much to Meliſſa's advantage: but told me, ſhe begged I would endeavour to get Meliſſa's conſent without her interpoſing her authority; ſince ſhe could not reſolve, even in ſo advantageous a thing, to force her inclination. When I named it to the young beauty, ſhe did not at firſt ſeem averſe to any thing but the leaving of her mother, which the ſmallneſs of her houſe would oblige her to. But, after a few days, the nearneſs of my houſe reconciled her to that ſcruple, and I had the joy to find, that inclination had a greater ſhare than intereſt in her compliance. Rejoice with me, Lyſander; my happineſs in your alliance will not end at my death; the converſation I ſhall now enjoy, will fit me for eternal rewards. I will make no apology to you for the ſallies of my pleaſure, which will let me talk to you of nothing but my own affairs. Adieu.

LETTER XIII.

To Serena.

My dear Serena,

AS I have always made you the confident of whatever has related to me, I cannot help giving you an account of the pleaſure and pain occaſioned by an acquaintance I have made with a young woman ſince I came hither. She was only daughter to a man who had been formerly an officer in the Engliſh army: but quitted it in diſcontent, and came hither with Semanthe his daughter, to treat with ſome people about a project of working in ſome mines, which are believed to have many large veins of ſilver in them.

Semanthe came to ſee me upon my arrival. I found ſo much wit and good-nature in her converſation, that we contracted a great intimacy, and were continually together. She had every qualification that could make her company entertaining; ſhe ſung, played on the harpſichord, painted in water-colours, and had a ſurpriſing genius for poetry. Her ſentiments on all ſubjects ſeemed juſt and noble. I thought myſelf the happieſt perſon in the world, in finding a companion ſo inſtructive and agreeable.

She told me the ſtory of her paſt life; which, deſcribed in her charming language, ſtill raiſed my eſteem. In every occurrence I had the pleaſure to find ſhe practiſed the higheſt rules of juſtice and benevolence; and, though now in the early part of her life, ſhe was guided by the niceſt rules of virtue. By a paſſion ſhe had for a perſon by whom ſhe was equally beloved, I was confirmed of the prudence of her conduct; I found that no partiality or tenderneſs could tempt her to deviate from the ſevereſt principles of modeſty and honour.

I was not at reſt till I had poured out all the ſecrets of my heart to her; which I did without the leaſt reſerve; and truſted her with a ſecret of the greateſt importance to my future tranquility.—— But what is human dependence!—— I found the inmoſt ſecrets of my ſoul betrayed by the perſon in whom I had ſo entirely confided.——I knew not how to behave myſelf in this perplexity.———I had too much compaſſion for my fallen friend, to give her the pain and confuſion of hearing my reproaches, and too much ſincerity, to continue my intimacy with her: but, for my own ſecurity, I was forced to break off all further commerce with one of whoſe guilt I had the utmoſt certainty.

This is a very ſenſible affliction to me in a place where I have ſo few acquaintance, and am not in a temper to contract any new friendſhip. I could as ſoon have queſtioned my own exiſtence, as Semanthe's truth; and now, though I cannot acquit her, I am perpetually endeavouring to mitigate her crime. I tell my heart, her error did not proceed from any malignity in her nature, but a too great confidence in ſome other friend; that ſhe, as well as I, had been deceived, and only told my ſecrets where ſhe thought ſhe might ſafely have truſted her own. I am ready to melt into tears whenever I think of her, and find more compaſſion than anger on reflecting on her conduct. Though I no longer converſe with her, it is more to make her ſenſible of her guilt, in betraying a truſt of importance, than to ſhew my own reſentment. I ſhall be for ever intereſted in her welfare; and if my prayers have any force, ſhe will live to wear off every failing that can caſt a blemiſh on a mind capable of arriving at as great a degree of perfection as human nature is capable of.

I have wrote myſelf into too melancholy a humour to ſay any more, but that I am

Yours,

Iſabella.

LETTER XIV.

From Melinda, giving an account of her confinement.

My dear Oriana,

I Told you, before I left my brother's house, that you should hear from me as soon as I was settled, and that I would inform you of the reason of my flight. You have too much candour and charity to judge harshly of my proceedings; which, could you see my heart, you would rather pity than condemn me for.

You have often, within these two last years, observed an alteration in my temper and person. I am no more the sprightly florid creature that you used to call the emblem of health and chearfulness. You saw the change, but did not guess the cause was a secret, hopeless passion. I was at a play: I saw there one of the most agreeable persons in the world. His dress, his behaviour, every thing was graceful and easy. The tragedy of Cato was acted. He was attentive, and seemed to enter into every noble sentiment, where either the hero, or lover was described. His aspect wore the visible characters of fortitude and virtue. He stood up between the acts, and turned towards the box where I sat; and when I went out, he made way for me through the crowd. But I never after saw him in any public place, nor knew who nor what he was. But the charming youth had an impression on my thoughts, which had soon a very happy effect. I grew weary of the noisy tumultuous way of living in my brother's house, and refused sharing in the constant round of diversions that my sister loved. Nor could there be any thing more dissolute and extravagant than the manners of this family; assemblies, balls, gaming, —— all sorts of riots and licentiousness. I never indeed

approved these entertainments; and was always uneasy, without knowing how to make myself otherwise.

The paths to happiness that religion proposed, I was as ignorant of as the savage Americans in their native groves. Dumain, who married my sister, was a professed libertine. My parents left me very young to their care, my sister being many years older than I am: and if my godfathers and godmothers, instead of renouncing the pomps and vanities of the world for me in my baptism, had solemnly vowed I should be bred in the midst of those snares and seducing temptations, they could not more effectually have discharged their trust, than by placing me in this family; whose Sunday's amusement was cards; for we never went to church, unless in a frolic, to spend an idle hour in whispering or laughing.

However, my guardian-angel did not quit his charge; but by the impression of a virtuous love, fortified my soul from every loose inclination. I find diversions, grew fond of retirement. This soon gave me a habit of thinking; and, if I had schemes of happiness, they were all in some future life beyond the grave; but my notions were clouded and imperfect. Indeed I believed there was a God, and the reproaches of my own reason taught me to fear him: but I had never looked into the Bible since I learned to read; and was as ignorant of Christianity as a young Hottentot bred in a cave.

My pensive temper now detested vanity, in every appearance. Plays and novels no more diverted me. But wanting something to read, I saw a Bible in the room, where my sister's woman lay; and opening it my attention was immediately engaged. The history was new to me. I carried it to my chamber; but how was I surprised, to find the life and precepts of the great Founder of the Christian faith so different from the manners and principles of those who assumed that sacred profession! I found myself

in the flowery paths of ruin, nor knew how to extricate myself from the fatal snare. This was the secret language of my soul, to that invisible Pow'r which knew its sincerity:

Thou Ruler of the sky, almighty Name,
Whose piercing eye discerns my rising thoughts,
Ere they are form'd within my anxious breast;
Thou seest my soul struggling to break the bands,
Which thus detain her captive to the earth;
Thou seest how vainly she would soar on high;
Passion and pleasure clog her downy wing,
Prevent her flight and sink her to the dust;
There low she lies, and trembling begs thy aid,
Conscious how impotent she is without thee.

My sister soon perceived the alteration of my temper, and used her art to engage me in some criminal diversion; but in vain; I was sick and tired of these extravagancies. But what could I do? My fortune was lost in the South sea; I was dependent on Dumain's and my sister's charity; and to heighten my distress, I was importuned by my Lord—— (who was lately married,) to yield to his criminal passion. At this proposal I started with horror, but could not shun his address, without quitting this disorderly family; which I resolved to do, and cast myself on the protection of Heaven.

I left my brother's house just after dinner, and went in a hackney-coach to a woman in the city that had been my nurse. I engaged her to secrecy, and got her to inquire for a place in some merchant's family. She soon succeeded, and introduced me to the wife of an East-India merchant, who lived in great splendor. My business was to wait on her in the station of a chamber-maid. She was very handsome, modest, and unaffected. The orders of the family were so regular and peaceful, so perfectly the reverse of my brother's, that I thought myself in another world, and among a new set of beings.

Temperance and sobriety reigned amidst the height of plenty and festivity. The rooms were noble, and furnished with all the riches of the Indian world, and looked like the palace of some eastern monarch.

I found myself perfectly at ease. Dressing my mistress was all I had to do; which was a very agreeable employment, and soon dispatched. She had something so genteel in her manner, that every thing looked graceful and becoming on her, and cost but little trouble to make it fit well. Her conversation was innocent and instructive, her hours spent in reading, or some little amusement with her needle, without the least inclination to rambling after balls or masquerades.

I spent two or three weeks in this regular manner; my mistress treating me almost as a friend. I had not yet seen my master, who now returned from his country-house. But, my dear Oriana, think what was my affliction, when I discovered that he was the same lovely youth I had seen at the play. As soon as he saw me, he turned as red as crimson, and I as pale as ashes. He called by my name immediately into my mistress's room. It was almost two years since I had seen him, and I had some hopes I was forgot. However, I resolved to quit the family, if I found he knew me, or that my friendship for his wife did not extinguish my passion.

On my master's part, I soon found reason to be easy. I hardly ever saw him; he was either at the Exchange, or when at home, engaged in a series of beneficent actions. His wealth was immense, which he dispersed with an unequalled generosity. He assisted honest traders, that had but a small stock, paid the debts of prisoners, relieved the widow, and redressed the injured and oppressed. This was every day's business; which yet never intrenched on his hours of devotion, in private or public.

I now grew easy. A man of this character was not like to indulge a guilty flame in his own breast,

or to flatter it in mine; besides, his absence would soon relieve me; for he intended to go to the Indies with the fleet, which was to set sail within a month.

The time was now expired. The day before he went his voyage, after he had been an hour with my mistress, in some private conversation, he left her, and came directly into my room, with such an air of benignity in his face, as some heavenly minister would wear, who brought a message of peace.

He began: "You will be surprised, madam, to find I know your family, and the reason you have to put yourself into the protection of mine. The first sight I had of you at the play, made an impression, which was never effaced, till I gave my vows to the best of wives. It is with some confusion I own the wrong I did your virtue, when I tell you nothing should have prevented my full relief of the passion you first raised, but the fatal day of the house you was in; which was so extravagant, that it forbade me ever thinking of you. But I now do you entire justice, and acquire that triumph of honour, that put you in a station so low, to secure yourself from the temptation of returning to your brother. I have left you ten thousand pounds in bank bills; and have told your cafe (as I had it from the woman that nursed you) to my wife, who has all the virtues that ever adorned the sex. She yielded to the proposal with transport, and wants nothing but I am gone to deliver the bills." He said this, and left me without time or language to speak my gratitude.

My mistress immediately came into the chamber, with goodness shining in her eyes, and gave me the bank-bills, with a grace which only virtue can stamp on human actions. She prevented my thanks by making an apology for her ignorance of my quality, assuring me, the house was entirely at my command; and that the hopes of my staying with her was the greatest satisfaction she proposed in her dear

Henry's absence. I could not possibly discover my sense of this surprising benefit, by all the force of language. — My silence, and the tenderness into which she saw my soul was melted, was the only evidence of gratitude I could now give.

In the morning, when every thing was ready for the parting of the East-India fleet, my generous benefactor came into his wife's chamber, to take his last adieu. I was with her, endeavouring to give that consolation myself wanted. Her grief drew some reluctant tears from him, while he endeavoured to conceal the inward anguish. The hero and the lover appeared in his behaviour. And when, to excuse the incomparance of her sorrow, his wife urged the dangers of the seas, and the rage of barbarous nations on the shore, I shall never forget with what an air of greatness he replied, "*Deus Deus, et ye et ei point d'autre crainte*." — I fear God, and have no other fear. Thus undaunted would the God-like man have appeared, had he seen the stars falling from their orbs, and heard the sound of the last thunders. When he had, with an apparent regret, freed himself from the embraces of his wife, with a look of compassion, like that of some playing angel, he bid me fare well. His domestics were lost in grief; the passage from his house was crowded with his grateful dependents, whose wrongs or necessities had been redressed by him. A thousand ardent prayers for his prosperity reached the lines, and gained the divine assent; while he hasted through the admiring throng, distressed with the popular applause.

How poor a figure is that of a libertine, in his most glittering heights of vanity, compared to this great man, who has so early begun his race of glory, and is in the very bloom of youth mature, in every [illegible] of passing his hours in a trind of idle amusements, the guy part of his life is devoted to

Heaven, and the public welfare. You know where to find

Your humble servant,

Melinda.

LETTER XV.

To Lapidus.

AS my reformation is partly owing to that [illegible] sited notion of virtue your example gave me, it is one of the greatest satisfactions I have, to express the sense of that immense obligation, by unfolding the most secret recesses of my soul to you.

I cannot but communicate my company while every view my thoughts take heightens my happiness. I look back on the [illegible] scene, the tumult and perplexity of my life past, and bless the gracious power that saved me on the very edge of perdition. When I look forward, my expectations are all bright and unbounded.

I bid my soul take its ease, banish every care, and act without restraint, the glorious prodigal. I survey my vast possession, lose my wishes in endless plenty, and give up all my powers to indolence and joy. I look to the [illegible], count the heavenly glories, and call the treasures of eternity my own.

Let chaos come again; be the [illegible] creation [illegible] in darkness, and the fair face of nature [illegible] an universal blank; let her beauties [illegible], and [illegible] divine characters [illegible] be effaced; I shall yet be happy. When the groves shall no more redew their verdure, nor the vallies boast their [illegible] prize,—when the sun is extinguished in the [illegible], and all the [illegible] have [illegible] their golden names,—when the [illegible] shall lift his hand on high, and swear by the [illegible] name—That time shall be no more,—when these transitory images of things [illegible] their

flight, I shall explore the worlds of life and pleasure, and triumph in the plenitude of bliss.

Then shall the celestial oceans be unveiled, and the heaven of heavens disclose their glories; the ineffable Divinity shall shew the milder beauties of his face, and manifest as much of his excellence, as created intellects can support. But what angel's wing has measured the height of his throne; who has entered those sacred recesses, where he dwells in himself, possessed of unbounded bliss? Has the ocean of joy been fathomed, or the limits of independent felicity described? Who has found access to the inmost habitations of the Most High, and gazed on essential glory; before whose fainter emanations the angelic splendors are eclipsed, the thrones and principalities of light disappear.

What oath is found to those sublime retreats,
Where pleasure banquets in its regal seats,
Where Beauty triumphs in her native bow'r,
Uncopy'd yet by the creating pow'r?
Ten thousand various forms, divinely fair,
Sparkle in their supreme ideas there;
While wisdom, with superior order, shines
In boundless schemes, and infinite designs;
Wondrous the prospect, clear, and unconfin'd,
But open only to th' Eternal Mind.
What tow'ring intellect, with daring flight,
Has made excursion through these realms of light;
The bless'd worlds, where th' angelic's God,
From all duration made his faith-words?
Whor'er has work'd, with bold inquiring eyes,
From whence the sweet fountains of life arise;
How from their deep exhaustless source they flow,
To actuate heaven, and cheer the world below?
Those dangling habitations who has found,
Where Love, in all his hear'nly charms, sits crown'd?
Great Love, th' Almighty Father's first delight,
His image, and the darling of his sight;

LETTER XVI.

The story of Olinda and Sophronia.

[Translated from Tasso's Jerusalem, book 2.]

THE king was now with martial cares oppress'd,
When curs'd Isaurus thus his lord address'd:
"To share your fate, great Sir, I left my cell,
"And bring you all th' afflicting force of hell:
"Th' infernal spirits subject to my will,
"With eager speed, my first commands fulfil;
"By them inform'd, this method I propose,
"To guard the fortress, and insult your foes.
"Beneath a temple which the Christians own,
"Descends a vault, to all but them unknown:
"Within the awful consecrated ground
"An image of the virgin-mother's found;
"Perpetual lamps before the wondrous maid
"Are lighted up, and fragrant incense laid.
"This statue, Sir, by your own hands convey'd
"From thence, must be in Macon's temple laid;
"Secur'd by spells, while that does safe remain,
"Godfrey shall storm the fated town in vain."
This said, th' impatient king directs his pace,
With impious fury, to the holy place;
Nor to profane the sacred pavement fears,
But madly thence the beauteous image bears.
Then in his god's polluted seat 'twas laid,
While o'er it ev'ry charm the wizzard said.
But when in heav'n the next gay morning shone,
Its guardian finds the sacred treasure gone;
Searches in vain; then with a thousand fears,
Distracted, to the court, the tidings bears.
The prince, his Christian subjects first suspects,
And all his flaming rage at them directs:
But whether human hands the work had done,
Or power divine, to men was yet unknown.

The curs'd enchanter mutters o'er his spells,
Yet nothing by the hellish art reveals;
Each house was ransack'd to its last retreat,
But no success th' [illegible] sweat;
"'Tis then resolv'd," the raving monarch cries,
"I'll doom them all one gen'ral sacrifice;
"[illegible] unknown offender falls;
"A fact like this for speedy vengeance calls."
[illegible] reach'd the Christians ear;
Their [illegible] wears.
No [illegible]
No [illegible]
Nor dare [illegible]
[illegible]
But [illegible]
Provided [illegible]
[illegible]
Amidst [illegible]
A lively [illegible]
An artless [illegible]
To [illegible] join'd
The [illegible]
With [illegible] zeal inspir'd,
From [illegible] retir'd;
But [illegible] forbid,
Nor suffer'd so much merit to be hid;
A [illegible] eyes,
His fatal [illegible] sacrifice;
One creed, one holy faith, they both confess'd;
In one pure form were both their [illegible]
The youth [illegible]
With [illegible] concear'd his care;
And [illegible] his pains
A stranger to his [illegible] remains;
His cares and services were all unpaid,
Nor once regarded by the [illegible] mind.
The Christians danger now had reach'd her ears,
And fill'd her with a thousand growing fears.
At last, some gen'rous stratagem she sought,
How, by her own, their safety might be bought.

But shame, and female fear, th' attempt restrain,
And render all her great intentions vain;
Till bolder hope her first design renew,
Which bravely now the [illegible] pursues.
She pass'd the crowded [illegible] with sober pace,
Nor strove to veil, nor yet expose her face;
Downward her eyes with [illegible] incline,
And with a nice engaging [illegible] shine;
Her charming air, her easy mein and dress,
Nor art, nor perfect negligence confess:
Admir'd of all, the thoughtful beauty pass'd,
And met the wild disorder'd king at last:
"Great Sir," she then began, "the Christians spare,
"And I th' unknown offender will declare."
A decent boldness lighten'd in her eyes,
Whose piercing lustre ev'ry heart surprise:
The vanquish'd monarch stood confus'd and charm'd,
His visage alter'd, and his rage disarm'd:
Ev'n love had enter'd, but th' imperious fair
Attack'd his soul by methods too severe;
Not frowns, nor coy foreboding beauty move,
But gentle smiles indulge the flame of love:
Yet, if not love, amazement and delight,
Her charms within his doubtful breast excite.
He paus'd, and thus——"Let me the secret share,
"The people's lives, at thy request, I'll spare."
"From first to last," she cries, "the bold design,
"The great attempt and daring action's mine."
And thus, by an heroical deceit,
Her life abandon'd for the public fate.
Again inquir'd the yet suspending king,
"Who was thy curs'd adviser in the thing?"
Th' undaunted maid replies, "The whole design,
"Contriv'd, resolv'd, and execute, is mine;
"The danger, the fatigue, was mine alone;
"The guilt and glory shall be all my own."
Enrag'd, the tyrant then replies——"And all
"My vengeance on thy wretched head shall fall."
"'Tis just," she calmly said, "and I am content;
"Th' illustrious action mine, mine be the punish-
ment.

"But, sir, your anxious searches are in vain
"The violated image to regain;
"For nothing but its ashes now remain;
"This way [illegible], that by no Pagan-hand
"The holy [illegible] might be again profan'd.
"Demand no more, my Lord; enough is known;
"The action I both justify and own."
Her daring language and relentless air,
No more the wild, outrageous King could bear;
No more his swelling fury could restrain;
Her youth, her powerful beauty, plead in vain:
Nor interceding love his rigour tames;
The pity'd virgin sentenc'd to the flames,
Whom thence (yet with compassion and remorse)
The murm'ring Pagans in a tumult force.
Her hands are bound, her modest face unveil'd,
No more its charms from vulgar eyes conceal'd,
Though void of fear her doubtful looks confess
A soft concern and human tenderness:
The rosy blush, that from her visage flies,
Not paleness, but a snowy white supplies.
Mean time, the wond'rous accident was known
From street to street, through all the swarming town.
The person doubtful, the relation true,
Among the rest, Olinda thither drew;
Too soon the wretched youth approach'd, and found
By impious hands, his charming mistress bound;
Distracted now among the guards he push'd,
And thus aloud th' [illegible] King address'd:
"Ah! Royal Sir, yourself no more deceive,
"Nor this fond maid's invented tale believe.
"Could she, alas! the cautious watch betray,
"And from its seat the weighty shrine convey?
"'Tis fiction all;—the enterprise was mine,
"Nor will I thus a glorious fate resign."
He adds, "Your temple down a sloping way,
"Receives the light and draws the beamy day;
"Through that I stole the sacred prize away.

" My Lord, the sentenc'd criminal you see;
" These chains, this cruel death, belongs to me."
" And could not then a single life suffice,
" Unhappy youth!" the fair Sophronia cries,
With kindling love, and pity in her eyes:
" What rage, what fury mov'd thee to expose,
" Thyself a victim to relentless foes?
" What tears, what mean reluctance have I shown,
" That you believe I cannot die alone?"
But nothing could her kind repulses gain;
Unshaken still, his first designs remain;
With stedfast courage each despises life,
And long between them held the generous strife;
Virtue, and mighty love dispute the field,
And neither in the friendly contest yield.
The tyrant raves, nor longer now refrains,
But both one cruel punishment ordains:
Commission'd soon, the charming youth they bind
With heavy chains, and to the stake confin'd.
" Are these," he cries, " the fetters love prepares?
" This the reward of all my tender cares?
" With fetter thoughts I fed my fond desires,
" And hop'd to fleet thee in more gentle fires.
" Yet could I, falling in thy tender arms,
" Expire, my death had still a thousand charms;
" Could I receive thy parting sighs, and join,
" At the last fatal gain, my lips with thine;
" Our souls united then to heav'n should fly,
" And I content, my charming fair, should die."
" Far other cares," she mildly said, " than these,
" Olinda, should our serious minds possess,
" Lament thy fate, contemplate the reward
" For faith and humble penitence prepar'd;
" The palm, the starry crown, and martyr's due,
" With all the boundless raptures that ensue;
" Survey the sun, survey the dazzling sky;
" To those bless'd regions we must shortly fly."
Of gods and men the Pagans murmur'd loud,
The Christians, silent, weep among the crowd.

The king, nor could his pity be disguis'd;
A strange, unusual tenderness surpris'd;
He durst no more the moving object view,
But fix'd, and scorning to relent, withdrew;
Sophronia, unconcern'd, alone appears,
Nor in the universal sorrow shares.

The mournful officers had plac'd the while,
And now were lighting up the smoky pile;
When a young champion, with a martial grace,
And lofty mien, approach'd the fatal place;
A tygress on his plumy helmet shone,
Which, for the fair Clorinda made her known:
Her sex's meer ornaments she fled,
In toilsome arms, to great atchievements bred;
Her hands the labour of the loom refuse,
Nor in a closet could her mind confine;
But o'er the fields in savage spoils array'd,
Or through the woods, with fearless thoughts, she strray'd.

When yet a child the fiery steed she rein'd,
Challeng'd the race, or wrestled on the sand;
Vast deserts, hills, and pathless wilds she trac'd,
When with her spear the foaming boar she chac'd.
From Persia now the blooming warrior came,
To win new trophies of immortal fame;
In battles past her sword had oft compell'd
The scatter'd Gauls to quit the bloody field.
Majestic charms, which every heart surprise,
And awful glories sparkle in her eyes.

Arriving here, prepar'd for death, she found
The tender youth and lovely virgin bound,
The feeble sex to heav'n her eyes address'd,
And in her looks a meint calm express'd;
The other grieves, and melts in pitying tears,
Nor for his own unhappy fate, but her's.
The warlike nymph for both compassion proves,
But most her care the silent sufferer moves.
She to the people turns, nor loses time,
Demands with haste, and hears in brief their crime;

Intreats the execution they'd delay,
And helps herself the rising flames to stay;
Then charg'd,—" Let none this office undertake,
" Till from the king I send them orders back."
Her bold commands the willing crowd obey;
She, to the court directed, speeds away,
And audience gain'd, begins,—" Great Prince, from far
" Th' unknown Clarinda comes, with you to share
" The toils and hazards of the hostile field;
" A volunteer to your commands I yield,
" Whether to meet the battle on the plain,
" Or at the walls the breaches to maintain."
The king replies, " Who has not heard thy fame?
" What distant climes are strangers to thy name?
" Thy deeds, illustrious virgin, spread thy praise,
" Where'er the wand'ring sun reveals his rays.
" Assisted thus we Godfrey's arms defy,
" By thee secur'd of certain victory;
" To thy command our forces we resign;
" The war, and all its glorious conduct's thine."
Her modest thanks the graceful maid express'd,
And thus again her gen'rous suit address'd;
" Unusual 'tis, I know, my Lord, and hard
" For service unperform'd, to ask reward;
" But, by your royal clemency assur'd,
" I boldly beg, of quick success secur'd.
" Reverse, great Sir, the sentenc'd lover's doom
" An act like this your bounty will become."
" Nothing was e'er," the vanquish'd king reply'd,
" To such a fair petitioner deny'd:
" Their lives, heroic maid, your purchase be;
" Guilty, or innocent, I set them free."

LETTER XVIII.

From Bellamour relating the sequel of his passion for Almeda, in the eighth letter of the first part of Letters Moral and Entertaining.

My dear Carlos,

I Am pleased to find, that neither the gaiety of your humour, nor your own successful amours, have made you insensible to the misfortunes of your friend. Your compassion is some relief; for I am really past jesting, and raillery, in this case, would have been inhuman.

You may remember, in my last letter, I had some hopes the discovery of my inclinations for Almeda would prevail with Elvira to free me from the engagement I made to my father to marry her. But I was disappointed. All the art and eloquence I employed to paint the height of my passion for her rival, had just the contrary effect. Instead of easing her anger and resentment, it melted her into a tenderness, of which I had never thought her capable. At last she told me, though she would not suffer her tongue so far to belie the sentiments of her heart as to refuse me, yet I might refuse to marry her, if I knew how to dispense with my obligations to a dying father.

The naming my father gave a pious emotion to my soul, and awakened all the filial gratitude and veneration due to his memory. I am no libertine. Virtue and vice are with me real distinctions. I dare not violate my word to the meanest of my dependents nor even to my worst enemy. Honour and conscience have hitherto governed my secret actions. I felt the force of Elvira's words, and left her without making any reply.

But how am I embarraſſed! If I had never ſeen the charming Almeda, I muſt have been unhappy Elvira has been, from her infancy, bred up with my ſiſters. My affection for her has been always the ſame as for them; and ſeems the tie of nature, not of choice. In all the little freedoms of converſation, I have treated her with the ſame decency as if ſhe ſtood in that relation. Deſtiny ſeemed to have ſet ſome ſacred bounds between us, that it would have been criminal to violate. This ſentiment is ſo habitual to my thoughts, that I could as ſoon commit inceſt, and break in one all the ſanctity of Nature's laws, as fall in love with Elvira. She is handſome enough; ſo are my ſiſters. I love her, as I do them, with a very pure and innocent affection. Her charms have never kindled one ſoft deſire in my breaſt; rather a religious horror would ſeize me in addreſſing her. She is as ſecure from my attempts, as if an angel ſtood viſibly before me to guard her virtue.

In this ſituation, imagine, if you can, how miſerable I muſt be with this legacy of a wife. She brings a vaſt fortune, you will tell me: but my dear Carlos, could ſhe bring me both the Indies, it could be no relief to my domeſtic chagrin. I am no rake. Nor could you propoſe any faſhionable liberty but what would heighten my uneaſineſs. Yet I dare not reflect on my father. It was not avarice that governed him, but rather compaſſion for a young orphan committed to his care. However I ſuffer, be his memory unblemiſhed, and the ſacred remains undiſturbed by my complaints.

But the criſis of my miſery is yet untold. Almeda is fixed to her cruel reſolution of ſeeing me no more. To what cave, what deſart, what unfrequented place ſhe has retired, I cannot find; but ſhe is certainly cloped from mortal men, and eſcapes all my inquiries. However, ſhe has favoured me with the incloſed letter ſince her retreat; which I have ſent, to juſtify the height of my paſſion; by

which you will see the beauty of her mind is equal to that of her charming person. I am,

SIR,

Yours, &c.

Bellamour.

To Bellamour.

I had not the least intention ever to write to you more, or put you in mind there was such a person in the world as Almeda, had not your distresses reached me. And your endeavours to find me out obliged me to assure you the search is in vain. I am determined never to see you more. And this shall be the last letter you will ever receive from me; which I write purely for your consolation, if an account of my quiet will be any to you.

From the moment you told me my happiness depended on Elvira's refusing you, I dismissed every flattering hope. I was sensible she knew too well how to distinguish merit, and how rarely such excellency as yours is to be met with. To resign you to the possession of another, to conquer the warmest wishes, and find happiness in giving pleasure to those we love, abstracted from ourselves, is a refinement few people are capable of, and what I did not expect from Elvira. She is conscious of her own superior charms, and may reasonably hope to gain your heart; whilst her esteem for you would not suffer her to let you dispose of yours to a person, who, in the common views of mankind, is unworthy of you.

Oh! why did Fate throw you in my way? Was it only to awaken me from my stupid negligence of the world to a sense of sorrow? to shew me a glimpse of happiness, only to make me more sensible of my indigence? Had your part in life been to act the dependent, and mine the advanced station, you had been left to me in quiet; nobody would have dif-

puted my right! and I should have found more, much more pleasure in rewarding such merit, than I should have done now in sharing your fortune. But why do I expostulate with Heaven, who, no doubt allotted me into this sphere of life, as most suitable for me? It is in our own power to make the incidents of human life good or evil. It is our own minds that constitute them either. The reception they meet with there, and the turn they take, gives them their proper tincture. Let us not disturb the wise œconomy, but submit to the methods of Providence. You have obeyed your father in the disposal of your person to Elvira: let her have your mind also. It is her right. I will confess it is. There only I could envy her happiness; and it is there her delicacy could never endure a rival. Let us not be just by halves. May the same generous spirit, that carried you through the first marks of your obedience animate you thro' all the offices of the most exalted virtue. I leave you, that I may be no obstacle to it; and beg you to consider, whatever faults you commit to Elvira, I am the occasion: and while I fly from all commerce with you, to preserve my innocence, you will frustrate my endeavours, and make me guilty.

There is a pleasure in our very sorrows, when they flow for a worthy object. You can give me that pleasure, and justify me to myself; and by those very virtues that tear you from me, bind me faster to you, and give me a vanity in you.

Your happiness will be mine. I will not tell you that I can forget you. It is impossible. The roses must forget to bloom, the birds to warble from the beach, the gay creation be undressed, and I insensible to perfection, ere your image can be erased out of my heart, or it can receive any other impression. A heart that has been your prize, cannot descend to a meaner sacrifice. No; the passion you have inspired suits the grandeur of your exalted genius, and must have the same duration with your virtue. I re-

tire from the world, not to avoid, but to enjoy you more at liberty. We are never absent from those we love. Every beauty that nature can produce, brings you to my thoughts, since you have pointed out all their various charms to me; taught me how to relish solitude, and direct my mind to entertainments above the reach of fortune.

That sentiment of tenderness I have for you, has some emanation of divinity upon it, while it naturally leads me to the contemplation of the supreme Excellence, and directs my devotions to the Fountain of Beauty. Those hopes and fears which alternately elevate or depress the mind in all human expectations, vanish. The soul is at liberty to pursue the interest of another life; raises its thoughts above this little scene of things, to fairer, future worlds; breaks of the fetters that chain it to this world, and smiles through her prison, with a holy impatience on the joys of immortality. There all human distinctions will be lost, and gold will have nothing to do in the settling of them.

Perhaps the gay world will pity me, and think religion and a cell but a melancholy recourse: but I shall not find it so, while I am not secluded from the generous Monimia's cheering eye. Her delicate and blameless sensibility of human passions, (she to whom suffering is a merit,) softens every care, and raises every joy. While she descends from the height of grandeur to the gentle offices of the sincere friend, she forgets every advantage of fortune, till virtue in distress calls for her aid. Her titles have no energy with her, but when they give her a privilege of doing good; and then she exerts them to their full force. She feels they cannot buy freedom to the mind, and that no calamity will retire in respect to them. Fate has so ordered it, that there is some similitude in our destinies, which reconciles me to mine; while she recommends piety and resignation with the strongest and most beautiful arguments, her own example;

and fortifies my mind, by putting every virtue, by her own practice, in the most amiable light. Sometimes she sings a *requiem* to our sorrows, soothes them to peace with the most harmonious numbers; and I have the ease of seeing my thoughts expressed in her's with every elegance; and when the serious soul exerts itself, she anticipates heaven, and gives a sweet foretaste of the songs of angels. Thus we baffle disappointment, and elude our sufferings. Honours, wealth, and beauty, stand abashed to see themselves despised; while devotion claps her wings at this her fairest triumph.

You will, I hope, from what I have said, be satisfied I am not unhappy; and take this last assurance from me, that I can never be so whilst you are blessed. You have annihilated every sense of sorrow in me. I have no tears, but when you claim them.

Adieu.

LETTER XVIII.

To Lady Mary, from her sister, just before her death.

"I Come, ye ghosts; prepare your roseate bow'rs,
"Celestial palms, and ever-blooming flow'rs.
"Thither, where sinners may have rest, I go,
"Where flames refin'd in breasts seraphic glow.

Pope.

This, my dear sister, is my long, my final adieu, till we meet in happier regions. The springs of life are running low, and nature, tired with human changes, longs to be at rest. The grave attends me, that mansion of silence and repose.

I soon shall close my weary eyes in peace,
And stretch compos'd upon my dusty bed.
Oh death! thy quiet and refreshing shade,
Shall yield a long, an unmolested rest,

From all the fruitless toil and vanity
That dwells below the [illegible]

I have had an ill state of health for some years, and have lately had two fits of an apoplexy. The third, my physician is so sincere as to let me know will be final. I am now infirm, and find some certain symptoms of its return, which induce me resolve to unburden my soul of its last pressure.

Forgive me, ye injured ashes of my great ancestors, nor blot my name from that illustrious line!——My dear sister, can your pure virtue forgive my fault, and plead my defence to my injured husband, when I am silent in the dust? Dear Lady Mary, will you not pardon a crime which is blotted out by Heaven? With that my peace is made by a long course of repentance. Weeks and months, and years, are past since the date of my guilt. The rising and the setting sun has been a constant witness to my devotions; the moon and the midnight-stars were conscious to my tears.

It is, as you know, fifteen years since I was married to Count Edgar, I have had two sons and three daughters. But shall I own this shameful truth! the eldest of the two brothers is not his. On a fatal night (let the horror of darkness cover it) I was, in my husband's absence, by the Marquis de ——, seduced. It was not the contrivance of a formal amour, but the effect of inadvertency and surprise. Oh! where was my guardian angel in that loose moment, that interval of reproach and madness?

The subject is too infamous for me to enter into particulars. But I have full assurance this youth is not the count's son; though his confidence in me, with his easy temper, kept him from ever making the least inquiry into any circumstance of my guilt. He has lately made his will, and to the child (whether (being his greatest favourite) given his whole estate, leaving the rest entirely dependent on this son, which, to my confusion, is not his own.

M

This secret, dear Lady Mary, I must intreat you to discover to Count Edgar after my death, that he may do his own children justice, and only provide moderately for the other. Assure him, that it was only in this instance I ever wronged my fidelity to him. This is the utmost reparation I can make; and, with a mind unburdened, I now call myself on infinite mercy, and smile in the view of death.

I come, ye ministers of fate, I come!
But while I pass the interceding gloom,
Should rising doubts my trembling heart invade,
With magic cheer the melancholy shade,
In soothing strains a gentle requiem sing,
And fondly, with heav'nly art, the golden string
The charming sound shall ev'ry care beguile,
And make the seats of desolation smile.
My soul, prepar'd by secret ecstasy,
Shall learn, and join the chorus of the sky.

Once more, my dear Ellet, adieu! Let my crime warn you never to be vain or secure. From the height of self-confidence and arrogant virtue, I was left to make this reproachful step, to humble me. My repentance has been deep and sincere; and, through the divine redemption, my pardon is procured, and my guilt for ever obliterated.

Your dying friend,

Hermione.

LETTER XIX.

A letter from Arthur, giving his friend a relation of the sudden death of his new bride, who was seized in the chapel while the sacred rites were performing.

My fate will furnish you with a full evidence of the vanity of human happiness. My last let-

ter was writ in the height of success, with the most arrogant expectations, and boast of a lasting felicity; now it is all changed, the shadows of night cover me.

The lovely Erminia, whom I had so long pursued, and at last persuaded to crown my wishes, the very morning she gave me her hand, before the sacred ceremony was fulfilled, was surprised with the fatal message of death; and carried in a swoon from the chapel to her chamber, where she soon expired in her mother's arms. This hour she appeared with all the cost and splendor of a youthful bride; the next she is a pale and senseless corpse, muffled in a ghastly shrowd. Those charms that in the morning promised an eternal bloom, before the evening have dropped their smiling pride; the sparkling eyes are sunk in darkness, the soft, the tuneful voice, is for ever silent; while a livid hue sits on the late rosy lips.

Thus airy pleasure dances in our eyes,
And spreads false images in fair disguise,
T' allure our souls, till just within our arms
The vision dies, and all the painted charms
Flee quick away from the pursuing sight,
Till they are lost in shades, and mingle with the night.

Oh death! how cruel was thy triumph! Youth and beauty, joy and blooming hope, lye here a victim to thy rage. The darksome prison of the grave must now confine thy gentle captive; instead of the pomp of a bridal-bed, the cold earth must be her lodging, dust and corruption her covering.

You will now expect I should practise the principles I have so often asserted, in exercising my boasted reason and moderation; or leave you to insult me with the arguments I lately produced to allay your grief, under the pressure of an uncommon misfortune. This reproach would be but just, at a period when heaven has given me a full evidence of the

truths I confeſſed, and ſet the vanity of human hopes in the cleareſt demonſtration before me. One would think I ſhould now, if ever, find it eaſy to moralize on theſe ſubjects, and act the philoſopher from mere neceſſity, if not from virtue.

Were the caſe yours, or any body's but my own, how many wiſe things ſhould I repeat! how fluently could I talk! ſo much more eaſy is it to dictate than to practiſe. And yet I am reaſonable by intervals. I am in more than name a Chriſtian. In ſome bright periods, I feel the force of that profeſſion, and pay homage to its ſacred rules. A heavenly ray ſcatters my grief, and cheers my ſoul with divine conſolations. The gay and the gloomy appearances of mortal things, vaniſh before the gleams of celeſtial light. Immortal pleaſures, with gentle invitations, call me to the ſkies, and all my thoughts aſcend.

But how ſhort my triumph! how eaſy the tranſition from reaſon to madneſs! Of what ſurpriſing variety is a human mind capable? Light and darkneſs, heaven and hell, ſeem blended within: it is all chaos, and wild diſorder. That reaſon which one moment relieves me, the next ſeems, with a juſt train of ideas, to torment me.

See there, all pale and dead, ſhe lyes;
For ever flow my ſtreaming eyes:
Fly, Hymen, with extinguiſh'd fires;
Fly, nuptial bliſs, and chaſte deſires:
Erminia's fled: the loveliest mind;
Faith, ſweetneſs, wit, together join'd.
Dwelt faith, and wit, and ſweetneſs there?
Oh! view the change, and drop a tear.

LETTER XX.

To Lycidas.

My dear Lycidas,

THere are seasons when the mind dilates itself, and, sensible of its own grandeur, breaks through the limits of this lower creation, in search of some unknown, and yet untasted pleasures. This is my present disposition. The wide limits of the sky have nothing to entertain me: Nature seems to be exhausted and indigent. Should she uncover her golden mines, or disclose the ruby sparkling in its bed; let her open the veins of sapphire, and show the diamond glittering on its native rock.——I have no avarice of this kind. The orient clouds that now adorn the morning-sky, could I reach them, would be a more substantial treasure.——Appear, ye fairest blandishments of sense; though lovely as the daughters of Eden, your allurements would now be lost.——Let sensuality appear in all her charms, the Persian delicacy, and the Roman pride;——let the pageantry of state, the triumphs lost in long oblivion, put on airy forms, and pass in their visionary splendor before me; in my present situation, methinks I could despise them all. These scenes would be but tiresome repetitions; for they are no novelties to my active imagination. Cleopatra's expensive vanity, and Pompey's glory, are familiar themes to my luxuriant fancy: their descriptions rather tire than delight me. Even the magnificence of the starry arch, the splendid structure of the universe, I now survey with indolence: I grow impatient to see a new and brighter scene appear; when these old heavens, and antiquated earth, shall put off their perishable forms, and stand dressed in immortal beauty and undecaying excellence. Blessed

period! why art thou so long delayed? Oh stretch thy shining wings, and come away! Mend thy pace, old lazy Time, and shake thy slow-paced sands! Make shorter circles, ye rolling planets! Thou lingering sun, how long wilt thou travel the celestial road! When shall thy radiant walk be finished! When will the great angel arrest thee in thy progress, and swear by him that made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is therein, that *Time shall be no more*!

My impatient soul springs forward to salute the happy period, and anticipates the promised joy.

Great Nature, then, thro' all her diff'rent works,
Shall be transform'd; the earth, and those gay skies,
Shall be no more the same; a brighter scene
Succeeds; and paradise in all its charms,
Shall be renew'd: but far its bliss improv'd,
Fitted for minds, to whom the mighty Maker
Shall give the glorious vision of his face,
Unvail'd, and smiling with eternal love.
Here let me dwell, nor turn one careless look
On yonder hated world;——here let me drink
Full draughts of bliss, and bathe in endless floods
Of life and joy;——here let me still converse.
It cannot be!——Mortality returns!
Ye radiant skies, adieu!——Ye starry worlds,
I must fulfil my day, and wait the hour
That brings eternal liberty and rest.

My native element prevails, and I must return to my original earth again. But I believe you are not overjoyed at this event; you could have resigned me to the skies in your present disposition: an earthly amour seems to ingross your affection; and I should much more have obliged you by a discourse of mortal charms, than of celestial attachments. But you must excuse me; my mind is in a position too sublime and delicate for these terrene nymphs: as fair as your mistress is, you have no rival in me; at this instant I am all for the immortals.

Oh, ye fair objects, ye untainted springs,
Of every excellence that charms the ſenſe!
Ye native beauties, ye primæval ſweets,
That bloſſom in the ſkies; but for the hopes
Of thoſe pure entertainments after death,
My ſoul would joyfully give up its claim
To an immortal ſtate: for what is life,
Reaſon, and theſe capacities of bliſs,
If loſt on toys! No, I have nobler aims,
Deſires unbounded by theſe narrow ſcies,
Theſe gaudy, flying tranſitory ſcenes;
Eternal glories, and enchanting beauties!

Next time I ſee you, on condition you will let me laugh, you ſhall talk of loves and graces, lilies and roſes, flames and darts, till Chanticleer gives his laſt ſummons to the phantoms and fairies to diſappear.

Clerimont.

LETTER XXII.

To the Earl of ——

My Lord,

I Am juſt recovered of the wound I received in the duel, which you, with ſo much reaſon and humanity, endeavoured to prevent. I think myſelf now under an obligation to own the juſtice and force of your Lordſhip's arguments, and to retract whatever I ſaid in defence of ſuch an inhuman practice. It was frenzy that made me reject the advice of one who had ſo true a notion of honour, and whoſe courage had been ſo gloriouſly employed in the cauſe of liberty, and the Proteſtant ſucceſſion.

You told me what the event of this mad adventure would be; that, inſtead of defending, I ſhould expoſe my ſiſter's innocence to the public cenſure.

It is too late for me to wish I had been guided by your generous and friendly admonitions: which, for the future, will wear the stamp of infallibility on them. Nor can I propose to myself a nobler example than your Lordship's, in every part of human life. The generous friend, the tender husband, and affectionate parent, appear in their proper lustre.——Virtue, with a superior excellence, shines in your character, and inforces her precepts with artless eloquence.

The review of your conduct is a severe reproach to my own. I shall never reflect on my late ridiculous exploit without confusion. Whatever bravery I affected, I was conscious of the most slavish fears, in the midst of my insolent flights of vanity. Deliberate guilt hung heavy on my soul. I spent the night before the bloody assignation, in anguish which no words can express: infernal visions haunted my imagination; the caverns of night, the joyless abodes, disclosed their terrors to my distracted fancy.

But so entirely was I governed by the maxims of the licentious part of the world, that with great gallantry I challenged my own ruin, and bid defiance to death and damnation: exposing myself to all the horrors, dreadful to reason and nature, to avoid the imputation of cowardice.

So tyrannical a thing is custom, that it is necessary to ask the world forgiveness, for presuming to be reasonable creatures. People are often compelled to be mad in their own defence, and to act against their reason, to avoid being singular. It is hard indeed, that the caprice of mankind should expect an apology from the few that are wiser than the rest, for being awake, and in their right senses: that they should be forced to excuse themselves for keeping their eyes open, and having penetration enough to forsee a distant danger, and so much direction as to avoid it.

A man resolved to leap from a precipice, might, with a better assurance, ridicule his companions for

not promising to follow him; and more justly reproach them with cowardice, for refusing to break their necks, than these men of honour can upbraid a person for not complying with rules of valour, at the expence of his life, and all his hopes of future happiness. If my generous adversary had not spared my life, when it lay at his mercy, (while my salvation depended upon that important moment,) instead of giving you this penitent relation, I had been now curing my own folly, under the weight of eternal infamy.

Your Lordship's, &c.

Antonio.

LETTER XXII.

To Valerius, from an English merchant; giving an account of the adventures of his voyage.

I Am at last safely arrived in Holland, and have taken the first opportunity to give you a relation of the adventures that detained me so long in foreign countries.

In my return from the Indies, I had some affairs with a Spanish merchant; which, while I was managing in one of their sea-ports, there came in a Spanish corsair, who had taken a rich Turkish prize, with several Turks and Moors prisoners, whom he offered to sale as slaves. I never had any traffic of this kind, from any view of interest, but, from a motive of compassion, I had purchased liberty for many a miserable wretch, to whom I gave freedom the moment I paid his ransom.

Among the captives newly taken, there was one distinguished by the richness of his habit, and more by the gracefulness of his port. He drew all my attention; of which he appeared sensible, and still di-

rected his looks to me: our souls seemed to greet one another, as if their intimacy had been of a long standing, and commenced in some pre-existent period. There was something in the air of this young stranger superior to adversity, and yet sensible of the present disadvantage of his fate; while I felt for him an emotion, soft as the ties of nature, and could not but impute it to the secret impression of some intelligent power, which was leading me to a height of generosity beyond my own intention; and, by an impulse of virtue on my soul, directing it to the accomplishment of some distant and unknown design of Providence. The heavenly instigation came with a prevailing force, and I could not but obey its dictates.

The price set on this captive was extravagantly high, and such as would be a vast disadvantage to my present affairs to part with. However, I listened to the gentle monitor within, and paid the corsair his full demands.

As soon as I had conducted the youth to my lodgings, I told him he was from that moment free; the price I had paid, was for his friendship and liberty.

"Then you have confined me (replied the gentle "stranger) by the most lasting engagements. I "might have broke through any other restraint; "but I am now your voluntary slave, and dare "trust you with a secret yet unknown to the Spa- "niards. My name is Orramel, the only son of a "wealthy Bassa in Constantinople, and you may "demand what you will for my ransom."

"You will soon be convinced (said I) there was "no mercenary intention in this action. The amity I have for you is noble and disinterested. It "was kindled by a celestial spark, an emanation "from the divine clemency, and terminates in no- "thing below your immortal happiness. And were "you inclined to examine those sacred truths which "would lead you to that felicity, and to there my

"fortune in a free and happy nation, the wealth of "the Indies should not buy you from my affec-"tions: but if it is your choice to return to the "customs and religion of your country, you are "absolutely free, without attending any terms for "your release."

With a friendly, but dejected look, he told me, it was impossible for him to dispense with his filial obligations to an indulgent parent; but he positively refused his freedom, till he had given intelligence, and received an answer from his father; which he soon had, with a *carte blanche* to me, on which I might make my own demands for his son's ransom. I returned it with no other terms, but the liberty of all the Christian slaves he had in his possession; hoping, by this disinterested conduct, to leave a conviction on the mind of my young friend in favour of Christianity. He could persuade me to receive nothing but some little present, and left me with an apparent concern.

It was some months after he was gone, before I could finish my negociations in Spain; but, as soon as they were dispatched, I embarked for Holland. We had not been a week at sea before the ship was taken by a Turkish pirate, and all the men in it carried to Constantinople, to be sold as slaves. My lot fell to a master from whom I was like to find most barbarous treatment: however, I was resolved to endure my bondage, till I could give intelligence to my friends in England to procure my ransom. I was fixed to this, that no hardship should reduce me to give Orramel an account of my distress, till I was again in circumstances not to need his kindness, nor expect a retaliation of my own.

But Heaven had kinder intentions by bringing me into this adversity, not left me long without redress. As I was talking, in a public place, to one of my fellow-slaves, Orramel came by. He passed beyond me: but instantly returning, looked on me with great attention, till some melting sorrow drop-

ped from his eyes: when, making inquiry of some that were near, to whom I belonged, and being informed, without speaking a word to me, he flew to my new master, paid his demand for my ransom, and immediately conducted me to his house, where he welcomed me with the warmest marks of affection. He spoke—he paused—and was in the greatest perplexity, to find language suitable to the sentiments of his soul.

"My brother!" said he, "my friend!——or, if "there are more sacred ties in nature or virtue, let "me call you by some gentler appellation! we are "now united by the bands of celestial amity, one "in the same holy faith, and hopes of a glorious "immortality. Your charity relieved me from a "worse than Spanish slavery, from the bondage of "vice and superstition: your conduct banished my "prejudices to the Christian name, and made way "for the entrance of those heavenly truths to which "I now assent. But this is a secret even to my own "domestics; and whether such a caution is criminal, I am not yet able to determine."

With what rapture, what attention, did I listen to this language! I blessed the accents that told me my friend, my Orramel, had embraced the Christian faith. An angel's song would have been less melodious. I looked upward, and, with a grateful elevation of mind, gave the glory to the Supreme Disposer of all human events. The instinct was from above, that first moved me to ransom this young captive: thence was the spring of my compassion. It would be vanity, it would be the most criminal arrogance, not to ascribe this action to the assisting Deity.

The illustrious Orramel made it his joy, his study, to evidence his affection. He told me, his father died since we parted in Spain; and that he had left five daughters, which he had by several of his wives. He offered me the choice of his sisters, if I had any thoughts of marriage; and promised a dowery with

her to my own content. One of them, he said, was privately bred a Christian by her mother, a beautiful woman of Armenia. I was pleased with the proposal, and impatient to see my fair mistress. In the mean time, he made me a present of several rich habits, and two Negroes to attend me.

The next day he conducted me to a fair summer-house, whither he sent for his sisters; who were all so handsome, that I was distressed with my own liberty; nor knew where to chuse, had not a principle of piety determined me to the young Armenian; who was not superior in beauty to the rest, but there was a decorum in her behaviour which the others wanted. She had more of the modesty and politeness of the European women, to whom you know I was always partial. My choice was fixed; and the more I conversed with my fair mistress, the more reason I found to approve it. We were privately married by a chaplain belonging to the British envoy. My generous friend gave her a fortune, which abundantly repaid all my losses; and, after a prosperous voyage, I am safely landed in Holland.

I have sent you this relation, as a memorial of my gratitude to Heaven; whose clemency has returned me more than measure for measure, and largely recompensed that liberality it first inspired.

Adieu.

LETTERS

MORAL AND ENTERTAINING.

PART III.

LETTER I.

To Lady Sophia. The sequel of the story of Rosalinda.

YOU will find me, dear Lady Sophia, in a more gay disposition than when I writ my last letter. Perhaps the fair season has some influence on my temper. The spring is now in its prime, and blooming Nature appears in all her various pride: the fields and groves resound with artless harmony: the linnet and warbling lark invite me often to rise with the fragrant morning: nor am I unwilling to obey the gentle summons; though, till I came here, I had never beheld the rising sun. The sight was as great a novelty to me as a blazing star would have been. The opening dawn was one of the arcana of nature, into which my curiosity had never pried. Indeed I had read many poetical descriptions, of the rosy fingered morning upbearing the gates of light, and, dressed in golden vestments, be-

ginning her progreſs over the eaſtern hills; but I left Aurora to her rural hours, without the leaſt inclination to trace her footſteps in the pearly dew. She was no precedent for me: I was too polite to open my eyes at ſuch ungenteel ſeaſons. The ſun ſhone in vain; its beams were uſeleſs till the modiſh world appeared.

But I have now conquered theſe refinements, and can bear the awkward cuſtom of riſing with the freſh morning, and going to bed when the duſky evening cloſes; or, I might keep myſelf awake while every other intelligent being on this part of the globe ſleeps: when human affairs ceaſe, and the calm creation ſeems lulled in a peaceful ſlumber, except elves and fairies. I cannot preciſely determine what hours they keep; but here is a nurſe in the family, who is intimately acquainted (as ſhe ſays) with theſe ſprightly phantoms. She has been admitted to their moon-light revels; and has led me to many a circle, diſtinguiſhed with perpetual verdure, where they uſe to dance their light fantaſtic rounds. Bridget and Joyce, our two dairy-maids, add their teſtimony to the nurſe's, and relate their own viſionary experience. I am no great infidel: ſometimes I believe, and always wiſh the pretty ſtories they tell me were true; but I dare not object againſt any of theſe relations, for fear of being thought a Heathen by the whole village.

My circumſtances are now very eaſy. My miſtreſs is fully perſuaded my education has been ſuperior to my preſent ſtation, and treats me more like a ſiſter than a ſervant. I am under no reſtraints but thoſe of gratitude and juſtice, which will not ſuffer me to be idle where I know myſelf to be dependent.

For a damſel of quality, I can work well enough with my needle; and as this is all my miſtreſs will ſuffer me to do, I carry my work to ſome verdant retreat, of which here are great variety, in a large garden, and wide range of orchard joining to the houſe. I am delighted with old-faſhioned bowers,

covered with woodbine and ſweet-briar, and can ſit as much at my eaſe on a bank of camomile ſhaded with laurel, as ever I did in a painted alcove. Maple-trees and box, with buſhes of roſes, are plated about in a very agreeable diſorder: the whole ſcene appears gay, but wild above rule or art.

"——While Nature here
"Wantons as in her prime, and plays at will
"Her virgin-fancies,——" MILTON.

The orchard joining to it is ſpacious and fair as the Heſperian incloſures; violets, primroſes, and crocus, embroider the level green on which you tread; the trees are let in rows; their branches mingle above, and are now in their gaudy bloſſoms; the birds ſit careleſs on the flowery ſprays, and from their little throats pour a ſtream of harmony; while fragrant gales refreſh the ſenſe, and with their aromatic breath diffuſe gladneſs to the ſoul.

Juſt at the bounds of this luxuriant retreat ſtands an ancient oak; the extended boughs are a ſhelter from the mid-day ſun, which perhaps your ladyſhip would endure rather than ſcreen your beauty in ſuch a ruſtic ſhade. Elyſian groves and myrtle-bowers are better ſuited to the delicacy of your imagination: but I am now reconciled to nature in its greateſt negligence; and, ſeated in this venerable receſs, find virtue and liberty the principle ſprings of human happineſs. My hours are here at my own diſpoſal; nor am I obliged to devote them to ceremony or vain amuſements. I find myſelf under no neceſſity to court the impertinent, or flatter the ambitious; nor to do a thouſand unreaſonable things, for fear of being ſingular, and out of the mode.

The only intimacy I have contracted is with a daughter of the miniſter of this parish. They call her Sally. Her converſation is perfectly innocent and agreeable, and has ſomething in it charming beyond all the ſpecious rules and ſtudied elegance of

the *beau-monde*. She has ſpent her leiſure in reading, and has certainly peruſed all the good books in her father's ſtudy, having never opened a page on any ſubject but religion, except *Argalus and Parthenia*. Her preciſeneſs is all natural and unaffected. Her looks, her words, her whole behaviour, has an air of ſanctity. One can hardly believe her an inhabitant of this world, but rather a native of ſome more refined and holy region. The ſweetneſs of her countenance, with the ſurpriſing beauty of her whole perſon, would confirm this thought, if ſome evidence of mortality did not appear in her declining health. She believes herſelf in a conſumption, and talks of dying as calmly as moſt people talk of going to ſleep.

However, this indifference is not, perhaps, entirely the effect of piety. A tender paſſion ſeems to have ſome ſhare in it. Her health began to decline from the time her lover died. He was the ſon of a neighbouring clergyman; their marriage was concluded by the conſent of both their parents. There had been an innocent tenderneſs between them from their childhood; and juſt at the period ſet to crown their mutual paſſion, the youth was ſeized with a fever, which ended his life, and left the gentle maid to mourn her diſappointed joys.

Since that, ſhe has no attachment to this world; all her ſchemes of happineſs are in a future ſtate, on which her whole attention is fixed; and nothing can be more ſparkling than her converſation on theſe ſubjects. As ſome people grow dull and moroſe in talking of religion, it brightens her countenance, gives a vivacity to her thoughts, and heavenly eloquence to her tongue. The beauty of the ſpangled firmament in a clear ſummer-evening gives her an apparent pleaſure. "In a little time," ſhe often ſays, "I ſhall have a nearer view of thoſe radiant "wonders, and ſhall myſelf outſhine their glimmering luſtre."

You would be glad, Lady Sophia, if I would

leave Sally with the angels, and talk to you of knights of the garter, blue ribbands, embroidered coats, and other ſublunary things. There is ſuch a wide extreme betwixt theſe ſubjects and heavenly themes, that I cannot introduce your tender affair with any manner of decorum: the deſcent is too precipitate. But if I muſt talk of love, my own amour is ſomewhat more of the ethereal kind than yours, and the tranſition will not be ſo difficult.

Nor will it diſpleaſe you, to hear that my lover continues conſtant, with the addition of ſix thouſand a-year to his eſtate. It was left him by one of the S——r family, who lately died without an heir.

My miſtreſs has been a conſtant advocate for the lovely youth, believing his propoſal a vaſt preferment for me; while my generous lover makes his addreſſes with greater warmth and aſſurance than when his eſtate was leſs, thinking it now in his power to offer me a reparation for whatever misfortune hath reduced me to a ſtate ſo unequal to what (he is perſuaded) my education has been.

I have not yet accepted his propoſal, nor diſcovered my rank to him; but it is very probable I ſhall do both. What objection can I, or rather what can you make againſt it? His deſcent is every way illuſtrious, and has vaſtly the advantage of mine. Nature has diſtinguiſhed him with an air of grandeur, beyond all the borrowed luſtre of titles or equipage. There is an elegance in his behaviour ſuperior to the rules of art or imitation: not Paris, when confeſſed prince on the plains of Ida, appeared more graceful. He talks of love, not in the ſtrains of dramatic frenzy, but with the ſobriety of reaſon and virtue. Perſuaſion dwells on his tongue, while he deſcribes the gentle paſſion in accents calm as the midnight-air. What the conſequence will be, I cannot yet determine. Dear Lady Sophia, adieu.

Roſalinda.

LETTER II.

To Lady Sophia.

MY romance is now finiſhed, the drama is come to a concluſion: I have been married theſe four months; and from the ſober regular way of life I am now in, you muſt expect no more adventures.

I forgot in my laſt to inform you, that with the ſix thouſand a-year there was a ſeat nobly furniſhed left to ——. What muſt I call him? Not my huſband, for fear the aukward domeſtic ſound ſhould give you the ſpleen. And if I ſhould give him the appellation of my gallant, my lover, or the charming youth, you would think me run mad in romance. But I hope I may call him by his proper name, which is Lucius.

The ſeat of which he is now the poſſeſſor, looks like the abode of liberty and guiltleſs delight. The ſituation has ſomething in it ſo jovial and airy, that it gives an alacrity to the mind. It ſtands on a gentle riſing, with the view of a ſpecious valley before it, through which a luxuriant river draws its ſhining train, and bleſſes the borders with immortal verdure; the wide champaign beyond opens a fair variety of hills, of groves, and fertile plains, which terminate in a diſtant proſpect of the ſea. You have this beautiful ſcene of nature from every window in the front of the houſe.

The oppoſite ſide of the ſtructure diſcloſes a quite different view. As that ſeems the triumph of Nature, this appears the inſult of Art. The gardens and groves are ſo exquiſitely fine and regular, that I fancy myſelf in fairy-land; it looks all like the effect of enchantment, and beyond human contrivance.

The loves and graces, figured in the painted al-

coves, perſuade me I am got among the immortals, who ſeem to court me to their ſoft receſſes; when through a long viſta the ſmiling forms riſe in juſt proportion before me, I converſe with deities, and am charmed with the wonders of the poetical world.

I find leiſure enough for theſe viſionary delights, being diſcharged from family-cares by my huſband's grandmother, who is qualified to manage thoſe affairs with great prudence and decency. It is a pleaſure to me to ſubmit to her advice in every punctilio, as I find it obliges Lucius, who treats her with the utmoſt deference and reſpect; nor fails to find ſome handſome excuſe for any thing that has the appearance of obſtinacy or caprice in her temper.

His merit, in every occurence, ſecures my eſteem. An air of juſtice and benignity ſhines through his whole conduct. His mind was in the ſame elevation when his fortune was at the loweſt; nor has this unexpected turn had the leaſt influence on the modeſty and evenneſs of his diſpoſition. His management in every thing is at once generous and diſcreet. He has devoted a thouſand pounds a-year out of the ſix thouſand, to charitable uſes; another thouſand he ſecured to me for my peculiar expences; the reſt to be ſpent in his houſehold, the charge of which he has limited to his income, and pays his bills once a month with great exactneſs, that no honeſt tradeſman may be injured by his delay. Whatever treſpaſs is done by the careleſſneſs of his ſervants, in the purſuit of their rural ſports, he patiently hears the complaints of the ſufferers, and reſtores their damage to the full.

His compaſſion is equal to his juſtice. Never has he been ſeen to turn away from a ſpectacle of pity; never has he ſhut his ears to the voice of diſtreſs; never, by an inſolent reproach, ſilenced the cries of poverty, nor delayed his bounty to the neceſſitous.

Several honeſt clergymen, with large families and narrow incomes have already experienced his generoſity, and bleſſed their young benefactor. He has

taken a ſon of a neighbouring miniſter into the family, who was bred at the univerſity, and is a youth of great piety, and very good ſenſe. He reads conſtantly to us morning and evening prayers, when not a ſervant in the houſe is ſuffered to be abſent.

Lucius has a handſome collection of Engliſh and French authors. His father lived long enough to ſee him inſtructed in both theſe languages: ſo that his books, with the converſation of the young ſtudent, are the agreeable amuſement of his leiſure hours; which are not ſo many as he ſeems to wiſh, his rank and merit ſtill engaging him in new acquaintance, there being ſeveral gentlemen's ſeats ſcattered about in this pleaſant champaign.

I find myſelf more free and diſengaged, having no companion but Sally. In her converſation I forget I am below the ſtars, and mingle with immortal beings. Her ſentiments are all elevated and refined; the language of heaven flows from her lips, in accents ſweet as an angel's voice. She has a ſurpriſing memory, and ſpeaks the fineſt parts of Milton by heart. I fancy myſelf among the celeſtial miniſtrels, when ſhe repeats that deſcription, where

"——Their golden harps they take,
"Harps ever tun'd, that, glitt'ring by their ſide,
"Like quivers hang, and, with preamble ſweet
"Of charming ſymphony, they introduce
"Their ſacred ſong, and waken raptures high."

Mr Pope's Meſſiah is another of her favourite poems; which ſhe recites with ſuch a graceful pronunciation, that it ſeems always new and ſurpriſing.

But while I am enjoying this agreeable ſociety, I know it is a pleaſure that is ſtealing from me, like ſome fair flower, whoſe bloom withers while I am regaling my ſenſe with its fragrancy. The young ſaint is bidding adieu to mortal things, and prepa-

ring for her native skies. I brought her hither, to to try if the change of air would mend her health: but I see no advantage she has by it; and, finding her impatient to return, I have promised to carry her in my chaise to-morrow, back to her father's house. I go the more willingly, that I may make a visit to the peaceful abode where I spent so many happy hours.

I know not if my mistress has yet recovered the confusion she was in at the discovery of my quality. As for Lucius, it seemed to be no secret to him. He told me, there was something in my behaviour that convinced him I was not in my proper station; but by what misfortune I was sunk, he could never make the least conjecture. My conduct, he thought, was too reserved to suffer him to suspect any thing to my disadvantage; and when he found my concealment was on a religious account, it gave him the highest satisfaction, to find it in his power to place me in circumstances more agreeable and independent.

Two or three days after I was married, I writ to my father, with all the submission and tenderness that natural affection could dictate. I am informed he relents, and is pleased with an alliance to this noble family. But I have not yet had the honour of any letter or message from his Lordship. Oh! could I throw myself at his feet, and once more hear his paternal blessing, my happiness were complete!

The pastoral I have inclosed was only writ as a solitary amusement, which makes me send it without any apology, or giving myself the air of being an author. I hope it will not displease you, that my shepherd happens to be a Christian; and that the pastoral scene lies on the British plains, as long as I leave you to wander at your leisure in the vale of Tempe, or follow your fleecy charge on the fair Arcadian pastures. Adieu.

Yours, &c.

Rosalinda.

A PASTORAL.

HENRY and LUCY.

Henry. LUCY, while resting in this verdant shade,
By pow'r divine thus elegantly made,
Say, Canst thou envy pomp and regal rooms,
Gay with the luxury of Persian looms?
Or painted roofs, whose beauty would entice
The thoughts through all the fabled joys of vice?
Fabled, indeed! true joys it cannot boast,
Since pleasure flies when innocence is lost.
Remorse, despair, and every cruel guest,
Become the inmates of the guilty breast.

Lucy. How spotless, Henry, is thy well-turn'd mind,
Averse to ill, to follow good inclin'd!
With thee conversing, ev'ry day I learn
New charms in sacred virtue to discern;
And, emulous of thee, with joy pursue
That goodness I admire and love in you.

Henry. Thou need'st not learn of me. In Nature's book
Thou may'st on thy Creator's wisdom look:
And as the planets run their constant race,
His glorious footsteps in their order trace.
He bids the sun in all its beauty rise,
To bless our soil, and gild the vaulted skies;
And, by the word of his almighty power,
Ordains the moon to cheer the midnight hour;
While sparkling stars in solemn order wait
Upon her silent course, to grace her state.

Lucy. Nor in the skies alone his power is seen;
We view it in the grove, and flow'ry green.
To imitate whose charms all art is faint.
The roses glowing blush what hand can paint?
Or equal the pale lily's snowy hue?
Or emulate the cornflow'r's glossy blue?

Henry. Sure, Lucy, we, like the firſt pair, are bleſt,
While here, ſecure with innocence and reſt,
Our happy hours on downy pinions fly;
When thus aſſiſted by faith's ſtedfaſt eye,
Upon our Maker's works we humbly gaze,
And, for their goodneſs, render him the prize.
Thus, in the patriarch's days, the Jewiſh ſwains,
Who fed their flocks on Mamre's fruitful plains,
Worſhipp'd Jehovah in the woods and field,
And prais'd his name for all the fruit they yield:
Implor'd his mercy to direct their ways,
To guard their nights, and ſanctify their days.
But, ſee! the Ev'ning o'er the dewy lawn
Already has her ſable curtain drawn.
Homeward we'll go, and, as we ſlowly walk,
Beguil the tedious way with farther talk.

LETTER III.

From the ſame, to Lady Sophia.

Madam,

THE day after I writ to you laſt, I carried Sally home; where I left her, not thinking, when we parted, that we were to meet no more in this world: but ſo it proved. She languiſhed about three weeks, and then, without any ſtruggle or convulſive pangs, gently reſigned her breath.

With what impatience ſhe attended the happy period, the incloſed will inform you. She writ it a few days before ſhe died, and gave it in charge to one of her friends to deliver to me.

To Roſalinda.

Dear Lady Frances,

"MY ſands are now running low. The ſpring
" of life will ſoon ceaſe. The duſt is return-

"ing to its native duſt, and the immortal part to "its great original. The happy day is dawning, "which ſhall never be ſhaded with ſucceeding night. "Some glimmerings of celeſtial glory break through "the gloom, and ſcatter the horrors of death. I "hear from far the harps of heaven in ſoft prelu-"diums call me to the ſkies.

"I ſhall ſhortly mingle with the morning-ſtars, "and converſe with the firſt-born ſons of light. I "ſhall enter the bliſsful aſſembly, and be numbered "among the glittering attendants of the empyrean "courts. The ſupreme Excellence ſhall unvail it-"ſelf, and ſuffer me to gaze on uncreated beauty. "I ſhall feel the force, and breathe the raptures of "immortal love. The ſmiling moments crowned "with joy, and ever-blooming life, muſt now be-"gin their everlaſting round.

"The ſtormy ocean is paſt, the ſhort fatigue ful-"filled; the peaceful haven is in view. I am juſt "ſetting my foot on the bliſsful coaſt. The charm-"ing land of love, the aromatic breezes, already "meet me from the fragrant ſhore, and cheer me "in the laſt faintings of nature.

"Dear Lady Frances, adieu. Till now I never "bid you a glad farewell, nor parted without re-"luctance. But we ſhall meet in more ſerene cli-"mates. We ſhall meet in the fulneſs of joy, in "the elevations of glory. Mine, indeed, by the "juſt degrees of recompence, will be a ſtation far "below yours. My probation has been only the "paſſive exerciſe of content and patience. But "ſuch virtue as yours, which has triumphed on all "the gay allurements of the world, ſhall meet a "glorious diſtinction. The noble army of mar-"tyrs will receive you to their number, grace you "with the radiant circlet and victorious palm, and "record your conqueſt in the annals of heaven.

"I ſpeak this, to animate your virtue, to encou-"rage you in the race of glory. I am now paſt "flattery, or dependence on the greateſt of mor-

" tals. But I feel the moſt tender concern for your " happineſs, and ſhall carry the gentle impreſſion to " the regions of exalted friendſhip, the native do- " minions of love, to which I am now going. Once " more, my dear Roſalinda, adieu."

This letter came to me with the ſad tidings of her death. No language can deſcribe my grief in its juſt emphaſis. You will give me leave to weep, and ſypathize with

Your

Roſalinda.

LETTER IV.

To Carlos.

AS you was the confident of my unjuſt deſign, in viſiting Philander at his country-ſeat, you have reaſon to expect I ſhould inform you of the ſucceſs of that adventure.

I had a ſecret paſſion for Aſpaſia before her marriage with this noble youth, and flattered myſelf with ſome hopes of finding her prepoſſeſſed in my favour.

You know how exceeding cautious and diſcreet I have been in my pleaſures, and with what diſſimulation I have ſecured to myſelf the character of a man of honour and ſobriety. By this advantage I found it eaſy to impoſe on my friend; whoſe goodneſs was real and unaffected, while his unblemiſhed integrity left him unguarded to all my artifice.

But I found it impoſſible to delude my father by my ſpecious virtues. His penetration ſaw through that diſguiſe by which I had eſcaped the public cenſure. Nor could any thing have been more deteſtable to his open temper than the affectation and hypocriſy of mine. After he had traced one of my moſt criminal intrigues, and found me unreclaimed

by his tendereſt admonitions, he reſolved to diſinherit me, and ſettle his eſtate on my younger brother, who is really poſſeſſed of all thoſe good qualities, to which, with a vain oſtentation, I have only pretended.

My brother perceiving my father's diſguſt, and the intention he had to make him his heir, with an unequalled generoſity gave me intelligence of the threatened misfortune, deſiring me to employ ſome friend to perſuade my father from his levere proceeding.

This news came to me while I was detained a willing gueſt by Philander at his country-ſeat. I diſcovered the affair to him, who immediately offered to attempt a reconciliation. I gladly accepted the kind intention, nor knew any perſon ſo likely to ſucceed.

Philander propoſed ſtaying two or three days with my father, in order to inſinuate himſelf the more ſucceſsfully. In the mean time, I found but too eaſy acceſs to the fair Aſpaſia; and, by an artifice that deſerves the blackeſt infamy, prevailed with her to make a criminal diſappointment in a private garden, belonging to the houſe.

This was the ſecond day of her huſband's abſence. The happy hour (as I then thought it) arrived when I was to attend my miſtreſs in a ſequeſtered arbour. But juſt as I was entering the walk that led to it, a footman came haſtily after me with a letter from Philander, which brought me the welcome news of his ſucceſs with my father. The vaſt ſatisfaction he expreſſed for having procured this reconciliation, with the real concern for my welfare, which appeared in every line, raiſed a ſenſe of honour in my ſoul. I read the letter again, and found my guilt aggravated by its bright reverſe. My falſehood was heightened by the warmth and fidelity with which the generous man had purſued my intereſt. My crime ſtood before me in its moſt infamous view. But how to extricate myſelf from this perplexity, I was entirely at a loſs.

To neglect an opportunity I had with such solicitude obtained, to disappoint a yielding beauty, to dare the effects of her contempt or resentment, by acting contrary to all the gallant maxims of the world, was doing the utmost violence to a disposition like mine. But then, to wrong my friend with an evidence of his fidelity in my hand, where every tender line would reproach such villany. Alexander and Scipio (I told myself) would condemn me; with many an heroic Pagan, who, in the height of youthful desires, had conquered the allurements of a guilty passion.

It was happy for me, that some accident prevented Aspasia from following me so soon as she designed. I was so far from being impatient at her absence, that I blessed every moment's delay, and was contriving to avoid the interview just as I saw her entering the garden.

I had been unused to mental devotion; and yet, in this dangerous moment, on which my perdition seemed to hang, I sent a secret prayer to Heaven for assistance.

Instead of flying to the charmer's embraces with the gaiety of a lover, I went forward with a slow reluctant pace till we met, and then gave her my friend's letter. As soon as she had read it, she told me, "I might be assured it spoke the language of "his soul: and it is (added she) to the advantage-"ous light in which he has set your character; it is "entirely to that you are obliged, for the favour-"able opinion I have of you."

"Is it, indeed, to this generous man (I replied) "that I am indebted for the share I have in your "esteem! And can I return such goodness with the "vilest ingratitude!"——Here I paused, still keeping a respectful distance.

Aspasia, with her eyes fixed on the ground, stood in a silent confusion. But, in this mute interval, imagine, if you can, what must be the conflict of my soul! I had spoke my last; an eternal silence

must certainly have enſued, if the gentle Aſpaſia, perceiving my diſtreſs, had not put me out of pain for an apology.

"I ſee (ſaid ſhe) the diſorder you are in. This "retreat of honour ought to have been mine. I "ſincerely wiſh it had been ſo. However, you have "led me the way, and I owe my recovery to your "prudence."

"It was my importunity, Madam, (replied I,) "that drew you into this criminal engagement; for "which I am going to inflict on myſelf the ſevere "penalty of ſeeing you no more."

"This was what I was juſt reſolving, (anſwered "the fair penitent;) but you have gone before me "in every ſtep of virtue. We muſt indeed meet "no more. Some diſorder I feel gives me a pre-"tence to retire immediately to my chamber; and "you may leave this place early in the morning, "with a proper excuſe for not ſeeing me."

She was ſeated under a ſhade of jeſſamine, and appeared charming as the queen of love. My philoſophy began to ſtagger, when ſhe haſtily roſe, and left me in an agony of mind which no words can expreſs.

However, I had ſo much command of myſelf as not to follow her. My reaſon exerted all its powers. The Divinity within ſpoke with a commanding force, and bid the wild tempeſtuous paſſions be ſtill. My ſoul obeyed the ſacred dictates, while truth and friendſhip took full poſſeſſion of my breaſt.

I haſted early the next morning from this dangerous place; and muſt own to you, this action has given me a pleaſure in reflection ſuperior to all the gratifications of ſenſe.

Yours, *&c.*

Alcander.

LETTER V.

To Carlos, from the same.

AFter your severest raillery on my conduct I hope you will pardon me for being a reasonable creature, and not insist on my making an apology for following the dictates of honour and gratitude. To your cooler thoughts, virtue may not perhaps appear so trivial and fantastic a thing. In your splenetic intervals, falsehood and treachery will probably lose their charms, and put on an aspect of horror and deformity. When the sagacity of youth is past, and a few years have impaired your understanding, you may grow superstitious, and be whimsical enough to fancy friendship and truth are words of the most sacred importance. Since it is not impossible for you to fall into such errors yourself, you ought to pass a charitable censure on my principles and practice, however different from your own.

I have ventured to send you this careless translation of *Tasso's Enchanted Forest*. This beautiful fiction seems contrived to arm the soul with a noble resolution in whatever occurrence its virtues are called into action. Rinaldo's inflexibility, I hope, will keep me a little in countenance; though I have not the vanity to run a parallel between the young hero's exploit and mine.

Dear Carlos, adieu. Be assured I am too much your friend to leave any method untried for your reformation.

Alexander.

The ENCHANTED FOREST.

[Taken from Taſſo's Jeruſalem, book 18.]

THE dawning light ſcarce hover'd in the eaſt,
When young Rinaldo left his wonted reſt;
Completely arm'd in all his martial pride,
A coſtly ſcarf was o'er his ſhoulders ty'd:
Unſeen, he paſs'd along each Gleam tent,
And onward to the dreadful foreſt went.
'Twas now the ſeaſon when the ling'ring Night
Diſputes her empire with the riſing light;
A ruſty bluſh here paints the doubtful morn,
There glimm'ring ſtars th' uncertain ſhades adorn.
This ſcene the thoughtful hero entertain'd,
As on the ſteep of Olivet he gain'd
The dawning luſtre, and declining night,
With various beauties entertain his ſight.

"Ye num'rous flaming lamps above," he cries,
"Which deck the lofty temple of the ſkies!
"Thou ſun, whoſe face a golden ſplendor wears!
"Thou ſilver moon, and all ye ſparkling ſtars!
"What trifles to your glories are preferr'd!
"How little we celeſtial things regard!
"A ſparkling glance, the lightning of a ſmile,
"Of heav'n itſelf our eaſy hearts beguile."

Thus rav'ning, to the ſacred hill aſcends,
And humbly there with decent rev'rence bends;
Adoring to the eaſt, he turns his eyes,
His thoughts unbounded reach the inmoſt ſkies.
Mean-while the Morn in golden veſtments roſe,
Her viſage with a bright vermilion glows:
New beams Rinaldo's creſt and armour gild,
Which dart their luſtre o'er the verdant field;
Refreſhing breezes round him gently play,
And balmy odours on their wings convey;
While, from her lap, Aurora on his head
A cloud of pure celeſtial dew does ſhed;

Dipp'd in th' ethereal mist, a lucid white
His robes display, and stream with silver light:
Such when the morning's cheerful rays appear,
Such lively looks the op'ning blossoms wear,
So looks, renew'd in all its glitt'ring pride,
The serpent, when he casts his age aside.
The knight still to the wood his way pursu'd,
Nor any horror in its prospect view'd;
The fatal forest, whence with sudden dread
The braveſt soldiers of the camp had fled,
Appears to him a kind inviting shade.
Advancing on, a soft melodious sound
Fills all the fair enchanted grove around;
The noise of murm'ring currents rolling by,
With sighing winds, which thro' the branches fly;
The swan, in dying melancholy strains,
In concert with the nightingale complains;
The organ, harp, and human voice are found
Mingling their notes in one harmonious sound.
While from above, as others had before,
The youth expects to hear loud thunders rore;
Instead of these, the songs of Syrens finds,
The chant of birds, with warbling waves and winds.
Amaz'd, he now his hasty steps suspends,
And forward now with cautious paces bends;
No obstacle his passage yet withstood,
Besides an ample, smooth, transparent flood,
From whence a thousand riv'lets break away,
Which thro' the shades in wanton windings stray;
There banks were with luxuriant verdure crown'd,
And painted flow'rs adorn'd the smiling ground.
Rinaldo pass'd, when instantly appear'd,
A stately bridge on golden arches rear'd,
Presenting cross the stream a spacious way,
Which he undaunted pass'd without delay;
Nor sooner touch'd the river's distant brinks,
But down the visionary structure sinks;
And, what before in gentle waves roll'd by,
A torrent swells, and lifts its billows high.

No bounds the sudden inundation knows,
Rising like floods increas'd by melting snows.
The hero fearless still his course pursues,
And wheresoe'er he turns, fresh wonder views;
For wheresoe'er he turns, a sudden spring
Appears, and blooming flow'rs their odours bring;
The lilly courts him, and the fragrant rose
At his approach with brighter crimson glows;
Their crystal arms the bubbling springs display,
And living fountains open in his way;
The branchy trees their verdant pride renew,
From ev'ry leaf distils ambrosial dew;
The waters, winds, and tuneful birds again,
Join'd with the voice and lute, begin their soothing strain;
Nor yet appears to whom the melting song,
The human voice, and charming lute, belong.
Suspended he remains, and scarce believes
His waking thoughts, or what his sense perceives;
When issuing from the forest's lofty shade,
He finds an ample plain before him spread;
A wond'rous myrtle in the midst appear'd,
Aloft in air its stately head was rear'd;
Its height the palm and cypress far surpass,
And all beneath a closer shadow cast.
Around the leafy arms extended wide,
In tow'ring stood, of all the grove the pride:
On the prodigious plant he fix'd his eyes,
Till more prodigious things his mind surprise.
A pregnant oak with sudden rupture parts,
While from its trunk a blooming virgin starts;
Numbers like her their hollow prisons rend,
And on the plain in shining robes descend.
So dress'd, the graceful Cynthia haunts the groves;
Such are her nymphs, and such the goddess moves.
Their folding vests above the knee were ty'd,
Their slender legs the silken buskins hide;
Their snowy arms were bare; their locks behind
Dishevell'd hung, and wanton'd in the wind.
Like these appear the beauteous sylvan race,
When o'er the lawns the flying prey they trace;

No bows indeed they held, nor quivers wore,
But warbling lutes in their fair hands they bore;
A circle round the wondering knight they made,
And danc'd in artful measures as they play'd.
" Hail, lovely youth! (they sung,) our Lady's care!
" For thee these soft recesses we prepare;
" For thee she fondly languishes all day,
" And wastes her life in restless sires away;
" These groves thy absence lately seem'd to mourn,
" But all look fresh and gay at thy return."
While with these melting strains they charm his ears
A sweeter voice he from the myrtle hears,
And issuing thence a lovelier nymph appears.
If ancient times, with pious awe inspir'd,
Silenus in his antique form admir'd,
What had the superstitious dotage been,
The mad effect of this surprising scene!
Her shape was human; but a heav'nly grace,
And beauty all divine, adorn'd her face.
With doubtful eyes Rinaldo views the fair,
And soon recalls Armida's tempting air;
Then with a soft alluring pensive look,
Which meant a thousand tender things she spoke.
" Art thou return'd, the cause of all my pain?
" Do I behold those fatal eyes again?
" Dost thou at last, ungrateful man! relent,
" And pity my fond youth in sorrow spent?
" Or as an enemy pursue me here?
" For this thy arms and threat'ning looks declare.
" But I no enemy, no traitor fear'd,
" When o'er the flood the golden bridge I rear'd;
" When gaudy flow'rs along thy path were strow'd,
" And living springs to entertain thee flow'd."
Approaching nearer then, she softly cries,
" Remove this envious helmet's vain disguise,
" And let me view again those charming eyes."
With that a moving tear she fondly shed,
While from her cheeks the hasty blushes fled;

Then sigh'd, and downward cast her lovely eyes:
And soft complaints, and kind reproaches, tries:
Her words the coldest adamant would move,
And melt the most obdurate heart to love.
The youthful hero feels the kindling fires,
And timely from his dang'rous foe retires:
Again he seems her wiles, and fiercely drew
His shining sword, and at the myrtle flew.
Armidia runs before with eager haste,
Then twining round her darling plant embrac'd;
"Oh, stay," she cries, "stay thy inhuman hand,
"Or let thy weapon in my breast be stain'd."
Unmov'd, and deaf to all her pray'rs he stood,
And lifts his sword to hew the fatal wood.
Th' enchantress soon another method tries,
And as in dreams uncouth chimeras rise,
She stalks a monstrous bulk before his eyes:
A dusky gloom her changing face o'erspread,
Vanish'd the snowy white, and youthful red;
Then like Briareus, with his hundred hands,
A mighty giant in his view she stands:
And fifty flaming swords at once she wields,
And shakes aloft as many blazing shields;
Her nymphs appear like horrid Cyclops arm'd:
But nothing his undaunted heart alarm'd.
The martial youth his sounding strokes renew'd,
While hollow groans the sounding strokes ensu'd;
Stupendous terrors fill'd the darken'd place,
Resembling now the black infernal space;
Thunder'd the low'ring heavens with dreadful sound;
Echo'd in subterranean vaults the ground;
Trembled the earth, lighten'd the flashing skies,
While warring winds from ev'ry quarter rise.
Rinaldo stands the raging tempest's frown,
Till one fierce stroke fells the tall myrtle down:
Th' enchantment ends; the phantoms disappear,
The storms are hush'd, the heav'ns serenely clear.

LETTER VI.

To Albanus.

YOU seem at present suspended between virtue and vice; your mind is in such a mysterious situation, that it is not easy to determine to what class you belong. One can hardly call you a saint, the flattery would be too apparent; and yet it would be a little uncharitable to put you in the opposite rank, where your own modesty has placed you. But my business is not to dispute what you are, but to give you the information you desire; and, from my own experience, to resolve on which side the advantage of pleasure falls.

You imagine I have acted in both the characters of saint and sinner, and tried the extremes of virtue and vice. In the last I am too much experienced; but this makes me more capable of passing a censure; for I was a sort of philosophic libertine, and pursued pleasure for the sake of demonstration. I paused, I reasoned, I made critical reflections on every enjoyment; I proposed something beyond gratifying a low and sensual inclination; mine was a deliberate search after happiness; while the method was wrong, my end was right; but every guilty experiment brought its own conviction, and left me restless and disappointed.

Sometimes I exclaimed in prose, sometimes in verse. I burlesqued the vanities of life, and the weakness of human nature; I turned moralist, looked grave, and acted soberly. But this was a situation too cold for my temper; it was neither sleeping nor waking: this supine indolence was but a poor exchange for the jovial activities I had resigned; nor could I assent to that spiritless maxim, that *virtue was its own reward*, if there was no future expectation. *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow*

we die, appeared to me a much more rational conclusion.

However, this deliberation, this pause, this moral essay, and restraint of my passions, was the first step I made towards real happiness. In the absence of sensual amusements, my thoughts found leisure, for a nobler application; my soul grew familiar with itself, and sought acquaintance with intellectual beings. Distressed with the vicissitude of mortal things, it traced back its own divine original, and claimed paternal refuge from the great Spring of all existence. I felt the attraction strong as the bands of nature; that felicity I had blindly sought, the unknown God I had ignorantly worshipped, now revealed himself to me, as the sovereign good, and my peculiar bliss.

How an almighty agent acts, in language of men can describe; but I felt the sacred influence. I heard the heavenly sound, the soft, melodious voice calling me away from earthly vanities, while a ray of celestial beauty, sparkling on my soul, eclipsed the glories of the world, and darkened all the pride of Nature; the mists of ignorance and error vanished before the divine illumination, which, with a pleasing evidence, compelled my assent to the glorious truths it proposed; my apprehensions were enlarged, and a sanctity of disposition infused; those heights of virtue which I once thought impracticable, now appeared easy, and attended with ineffable delight, such as gave me some delicious prelibations.

> Of those immortal banquets, those rich draughts
> Of vital pleasure, which my thirsty soul
> Shall drink for ever in ——

These are no fantastic delusions, but real and divine enjoyments, such as enlarge the mind, and give it a nobler disposition, while, conscious of its own grandeur, it rests in nothing below boundless and immortal felicity.

This is what you seem anxiously to inquire after. How happy shall I be, if my experience can direct you in such an important search! You will excuse the sending you these negligent lines on a subject so superior to my genius.

On HAPPINESS.

WHatever diff'rent paths mankind pursue,
Oh Happiness! 'tis thee we keep in view!
'Tis thee in ev'ry action we intend,
The noblest motive, and superior end!
Thou dost the scarcely finish'd soul incline;
Its first desire, and conscious thought, is thine;
Our infant-breasts are sway'd by thee alone,
When pride and jealousy are yet unknown.
Through life's obscure and wild variety,
Our stedfast wishes never start from thee.
Thou art of all our waking thoughts the theme;
We court thee too in ev'ry nightly dream;
Th' immortal flame with equal ardour glows,
Nor one short moment's intermission knows:
Whether to courts or temples we repair,
With restless zeal we search thee ev'ry where;
Whether the roads that to perdition lead,
Or those which guide us to the stars, we tread,
Thine is the hope, th' ineftimable prize,
The glorious mark, on which we fix our eyes!
Thy charms th' enamour'd libertine entice
Thro' all the wild destructive paths of vice.
Th' adventrous man refines on sin, and makes,
In search of thee, to hell new-beaten tracks;
Enchanting pleasure dances in his sight,
And tempts him forward by a treach'rous light:
But while thy flatt'ring smiles his thoughts inflame,
Thou prov'st to him a mere fantastic name,
A fair delusion, and a pleasing cheat,
A gaudy vision, and a soft deceit;

Which while the wretch pursues with eager pace,
And seems to overtake thee in the race,
An airy phantom mocks his eager toil,
His arms in vain the fleeting form enfold,
Still like a gliding ghost it slips his fondest hold;
The disappointment heightens yet his rage,
And tempts him with fresh ardour to engage;
Succeeds, but unweary'd in the strife,
He still pursues thee to the verge of life;
With life compell'd his dotage to resign,
The last despairing sigh he breathes in thine.

The pious man directs his vows to thee,
And proves thy most pathetic votary:
Virtue itself, e'en virtue he regards
But as thy favour the fatigue rewards.
To silent shades, and solitude obscure,
Far from the world thou dost his steps allure;
But there he lives retir'd, a glorious epicure,
And gladly quits the fleeting joys of sense,
In search of bliss more lasting and intense.
Not such as the fond lover's heart beguiles,
When, without art, his yielding mistress smiles;
Not such as fills the youthful hero's mind,
When wreathes of victory his temples bind:
His thoughts a nobler luxury would prove,
Such as the bless'd immortals know above;
A spark divine like theirs his breast inflames,
Enjoyments all divine like theirs he claims,
Licentious and unbounded in his aims,
To pleasure's sacred spring his soul aspires,
There only hopes to quench his infinite desires.
Not ev'n to hell the passion can suppress,
Fir'd by thy name, alluring Happiness!
Undaunted he maintains the glorious strife,
And struggles for thee to the close of life;
Then joyful clasps thee on his dying arms,
And yields his breath, possess'd of all thy charms.

This is the conclusion to which I stand, after the exactest trial of sensual and intellectual pleasures.

Without hesitation, I gave my voice on the side of virtue; and this in the gayest period of my life, unruffled with adversity or disappointment, in the affluence of fortune, and the luxury of youth; with a mind capacious of bliss, and panting after happiness.

In this situation you cannot object against the severity of my temper. However, as few persons care to be wise at other people's expence, I cannot expect, that, without any farther trial, you will acquiesce in the judgment of

Your most humble servant.

LETTER VII.

To Lucius.

IT was you that proposed this subject to my muse, but I have hardly the vanity to hope the performance will please a judgment so exact as yours. However, it is entirely submitted to your censure, by

Your most humble servant,

Lindamor.

An Ode on LOVE.

ASSIST, my doubtful muse, propitious Love,
Let all my soul the sacred impulse prove:
For thine's a holy unpolluted flame.
Howe'er the libertine profane thy name;
Howe'er with impious cant, hypocrify
And senseless superstition blemish thee;
The pure refult of sober reason thou;
Thy laws the strictest honour must allow:
Thy laws each vicious thought controul;
From thee devotion takes its flaming wings

Thou giv'st the noblest motion to the soul,
And govern'st all its springs.
To great attempts thou gen'rous minds dost move,
And only such are privileg'd to love;
Th' heroic race, the brightest names of old,
Were all thy glorious votaries enroll'd.
Without thee, human life
A tedious round of circling cares would be,
A curs'd fatigue, continual strife,
And tiresome vanity.

Thy charms our restless griefs controul,
And calm the stormy motions of the soul:
Before thee pride and enmity,
With all infernal passions, fly.
And could'st thou in th' realms below
But once display thy beauteous face,
The damn'd a short redress might know,
And ev'ry terror fly the place.
From thee one bright unclouded smile
Would all the torments there beguile;
Thy smiles th' eternal tempest could assuage,
And make the damn'd forget their rage;
The sulph'rous waves would cease to roar,
And calmly glide along the silent shore.

Had Orpheus (as 'tis fabled) through the ground
To hell the gloomy passage sound,
His warbling voice, his melting lyre,
Nor artful touches on the trembling string,
Had ne'er obtain'd his bold desire,
Nor charm'd the furies with their fallen king;
But Love his tender theme, had love been nam'd,
That potent sound alone had all their malice tam'd.

On thee the graces and delights attend,
On thy propitious influence
Our gayest hours d pend;
Whatever charms the soul or sense,

Beauty and sacred harmony.
Accomplish'd Love! belongs to thee.
To thee his shining genius Strephon owes,
His just ideas, and expressions fit;
To thee Cleora owes that sprightly wit,
Which from her lips in easy language flows.

The mute creation owns thy sway,
And things inanimate thy laws obey;
At thy command the first confusion ceas'd,
Chaos and wild disorder were appeas'd;
Discord and fierce antipathy grew mild,
The gleams of light thro' yielding darkness smil'd,
And warring elements were reconcil'd:
Nature begun a steady course,
Govern'd by central charms, and sympathetic force,
But in the blissful seats alone,
Almighty Love! thy pow'r is fully known:
There they view thy charming face,
Painted with endless smiles, and ever-blooming grace.
Thy gentle torch burns there for ever bright,
And scatters round a mild propitious light;
All feel its pleasing influence,
While pure desires thy golden shafts dispense.

Th' immortal lovers, crown'd with fragrant flow'rs,
In holy shades, and blissful bow'rs,
To thee devote their happy hours,
While active joys too noble for disguise,
And vital pleasures sparkle in their eyes:
To thee alone, great Love, their heav'n they owe,
The boundless source whence all their blessings flow.
Thy sacred flame
Does ev'ry heav'nly breast inspire,
And tune the strings of each celestial lyre;
In flow'ry vales, to ev'ry blissful stream,
With melting notes they celebrate thy name;
Backward they roll the long extent
Of ages infinite, and sing thy great descent.

No fabled Venus gave thee birth,
At Cyprus yet the goddess was not nam'd,
Nor at Idalia, nor at Paphos fam'd:
Nor yet was feign'd from foaming seas to rise;
For yet no seas appear'd, or fountains flow'd:
Nor yet distinguish'd in the skies,
Her radiant planet glow'd.
But thou wast long ere motion sprung its race,
Ere chaos and immeasurable space
Resign'd their useless rights to elemental place;
Before the sparkling lamps on high
Were kindled up, and hung around the sky;
Before the sun led on the circling hours,
Or vital seeds produc'd their active pow'rs;
Before the first intelligences strung
Their golden harps, and soft preludiums sung
To love, the mighty cause whence their existence sprung,
Th' ineffable Divinity,
His own resemblance meets in thee.
By this thy glorious lineage thou dost prove
Thy high descent; for GOD himself is Love.

LETTER VIII.

From Sylviana; giving an account of her manner of life before her marriage with the Earl of——.

YOUR curiosity is very obliging, in desiring to know my manner of life, till I had the honour of being married to my Lord ——. The account indeed would be perfectly insignificant without that circumstance; it is only my relation to him that gives me a concern for the decorum and propriety of my conduct, in the high station to which he has advanced me.

I must own, that my scrupulous dissent from some fashionable freedoms makes my behaviour appear somewhat singular and precise among the gallant part

of the world; but I hope, in this general toleration, I may, with indemnity, be a Christian, (though not a prude,) at fifteen. If this is an error, the prejudice of education must be my excuse, which keeps me from giving my assent to many of the genteel maxims of the age. Now will you be surprised at my nicety, when you know by what strict precepts early part of my life has been governed.

My father was a country clergyman, a person of exemplary piety; who, with a benefice of three hundred a year, treated his poor parishioners with great hospitality, and made a decent provision for his own family. My mother was bred a dissenter; and continued such, till either her esteem for my father, or the force of his arguments, prevailed with her to join in communion with the national church.

I was the eldest of three daughters, which were all the children they had. We were carefully instructed in the rules of justice and truth; and bred in the greatest purity of manners. No excuse, but sickness, ever detained us on Sundays from the public worship; nor were the intervals spent in any idle amusements. The whole day was sacred, and observed with a just solemnity. Through the rest of the week, prayers were constantly read mornings and evenings in the family; nor would my mother ever suffer cards or dancing in the house.

My two sisters were the prettiest demure things that ever were seen. They applied themselves with great diligence to assist my mother in any of her domestic concerns. But my temper being more sprightly, housewifery and plain work were my aversion. Reading was my prevailing attachment; and I had turned over every book in my father's library, except Latin and Greek. But here was not one play, or novel for my entertainment. However, I was supplied with amusements of this kind by my Lady Worthy's youngest daughter; who was our neighbour, and was pleased to honour me with some degree of intimacy. But I perused these authors with

great secrecy, and not without some inward remorse, this sort of reading being against my father's severe injunctions, and the pious rules I had been taught.

This was my manner of life till I was fifteen; when a brother of my mother's, a Turky merchant, died, and, having no child, left me twenty thousand pounds, with only some small legacies to my sisters. This advance of fortune gave me some distinction with my Lady Worthy; who, about the same time, had a fine summer-house painting. The story was, Diana hunting with her nymphs. Her Ladyship desired my mother that I might be drawn for one of the virgin-train.

Some time after this painting was finished, my Lord ——— came accidentally into these parts of the country; and waiting on my Lady Worthy, as they were in the summer-house, he took particular notice (I know not why) of the nymph for whom I had sat to the painter. Her Ladyship finding my Lord a little inquisitive, ordered a servant to call me to drink tea with them. I obeyed without the least suspicion what was the motive of her command.

I had hitherto looked on every mortal man with equality and indifference; nor found any thing to answer the description of poetical heroes, and dramatic beaux: but the moment I saw my Lord, every grace, every charm, appeared real, which before had pleased my imagination in agreeable fictions. The enchanting form, the fatal glance, the artful smile, the gentle, the prevailing accent, Love, with his whole artillery, seemed to insult me, and never more entirely subdued a mind so artless and unexperienced. However, to conceal my disorder, I withdrew as soon as the company would permit.

But how transformed was my soul from that guiltless calm I had till now enjoyed! The equality of my temper was broken, my thoughts had all a different turn. I went to church indeed; but could not

prayers as mechanically as a clock strikes. I joined in singing the psalms, but with no more understanding them the chimes repeat a tune to which they are set. Not only the next world, but this was erased from my memory. There were no flowers in the field, nor stars in the sky. My whole attention was fixed on the lovely young lady who was still in view; or if any other object intervened, the pleasing reverie, it was only to give me vexation. I was angry with every mortal for not looking as handsome, nor talking, so agreeably, as the charming man I admired.

I was some tedious days in suspence, whether my Lord had one favourable thought of me? but my doubts were agreeably satisfied, when I found he had desired my Lady Worthy to procure my father's consent, in order to make his addresses to me. My father embraced the offer, with a just sense of the honour that was done him.

For my part, I had never practised any disguise; and was unacquainted with all forms, but such as were the dictates of nature and virtue: nor was it possible for me to conceal the tender inclination: it was as visible in my silence as the most pathetic words could have made it. After I knew my Lord's character, and was convinced of his affection for me, I had a sort of vanity in owning a sense of his merit. This, I thought, justified the height of my passion: nor could I find any reason to violate my native sincerity, and affect indifference, where it would have been a crime to have been really insensible.

My noble lover expressed some impatience to conclude the affair; which was done with great secrecy and expedition. He suffered but one servant to attend him; and was so obliging, to stay a month after our marriage in my father's family. The scenes of low-life were a diverting novelty to him; while love and tenderness made the hours glide smoothly on. This period was all pastoral and ro-

mantle. The golden age seemed to be renewed with Ovid's *Cacoon*. I could have wished the noble youth divested of his hereditary honours; possessed only of a thirty flock, and graced with no distinction, but that of the *lovely swain*.

Then unmolested we had liv'd, and free
From those vexatious sorrows which greatness brings;
While rocks and meadows, shades and purling springs,
The flow'ry valley, and the gloomy grove,
Had heard of no superior name to Love.

However, I did not yet know the toils of grandeur; nor feel the effects of my splendid vassalage. I lived my own way, dressed and undressed myself. My mother, since the advance of my fortune, had kept me in fine lace-caps, and clean silk night-gowns; and, as I had plenty of flaxen hair falling into natural curls, my dress was easily adjusted, and seemed to please my Lord exceedingly. The little waiting on I had was by Cicely, my mother's head-servant. I had no notion of the *grand monde*, nor the part I was to act in it.

I had never seen London. The Mall, Hyde park, the Drawing-room, and Theatre, were less known to me than the planetary worlds.

In this state of nature, of darkness, and original simplicity, imagine to yourself what must be my perplexity, when my Lord carried me with him to make my first appearance in town, among the congratulations of his numerous friends! I found myself among a rank of people, to whose language, habits, and manners, I was as much a stranger, as if I had been in a foreign country.

My Lord had desired a sister, who lived with him, to procure every thing proper for me to appear with: and she spared no cost in jewels, or whatever else vanity itself could wish. She had been solicitous in her choice of a woman and chambermaid for me; and

they were really two of the finest people I had ever seen in my life. My woman (being much older than myself) I looked on as my superior; and could hardly forbear making an apology for the trouble I gave her. I spoke to her in very gentle and submissive terms; nor was it possible for me to get rid of the secret veneration, which the gravity of her countenance gave me. However, my lively temper was apt to make some gay excursions. When I was at first initiated in the mysteries of dress, I was not quite so serious, as she seemed to think the importance of the affair required.

While my head was dressing, I was merely passive, as long as Mrs Dupin suffered me to sit reading. I left the ball on my shoulders to be powdered as she thought fit; which, after two hours toil, I sometimes found swelled to such an enormous size with flowers, feathers, and bits of ribband, that I could not help begging her to reduce it to a dimension more agreeable to my shape; which, being slender, did not require a globe of that magnitude to adorn it.

But I was generally more inclined to cry than laugh on this occasion. The hours thus spent were an insupportable fatigue to me: nor could I answer to my conscience for such a vain expence of time. My being had a superior end: I was formed for immortality; which grand concern forbid me spending more hours at the toilet, than in my devotions. I had been taught their antiquated maxims; and however ridiculous they might appear in the gay moments of health, the approaches of death, I knew, would set them in their full force, and unquestioned evidence.

However, I had no design in dressing, but to please my Lord. It was only with regard to him, I was concerned for the figure I made in public. The flattery I heard on my beauty, gave me more confusion than joy: nor could I account for the design of those ridiculita.

I very innocently told a beau that followed me, that I was married: at which he burst into a loud laugh. It was some surprise to me, to find him so gay, at the discovery of what I thought would have sunk him into despair. I could not but wonder, that the beau who had just before been languishing and dying, should be so overjoyed, to find his pretensions lost, and his case hopeless: for I really thought he made love with an honest intention to marry me, only he had mistaken my circumstances.

My next lover was the most intimate friend my Lord had. The fine things he said, I took for raillery. Indeed it appeared ill jesting with such sacred things as friendship, and the honour of a family. However, I concealed his extravagance; and treated him with a coldness so real and unaffected, that he soon recovered himself.

But you may easily imagine what a sound these gallant proposals must have to one so unacquainted with the modish world; and who had never heard those vices named, but with terms of infamy and reproach.

After this account of myself, you will not wonder to find me so little at ease in the high station to which I abstraised. With what regret do I look back to the inglorious shades, the humble scenes of my past tranquillity! I was a stranger to ambition; but love seduced me from those peaceful retreats, where my first happy days were spent. It is only my affection for my Lord, that helps me to support this illustrious bondage, this splendid misery. But, as sincerely as I love him, I cannot, without a sigh, recall the harmless freedom, the unmolested innocence, in which the earliest part of my life was past; and am surprised to find myself the object of most people's envy, while in reality I merit their compassion. I am, without ceremony,

Madam,

Yours, &c.

LETTER IX.

To Mr. A.

I Have been contemplating on the period of all human glory, among the tombs in Westminster-Abbey. Here, the most towering ambition finds its limits: insulting Death has fixed the bounds, and pronounced the imperial mandate, *Hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther*; and *Here shall thy proud waves be stayed*. The wildest boasts of mortal vanity yield to the dreadful conqueror; the glory of nature, with all the accomplishments of art, are humbled together in the dust.

Here, in one horrid ruin, lyes
The great, the fair, the young, the wise;
Th' ambitious king, whose boundless mind
Scarce to a world could be confin'd,
Now, content with narrower room,
Lyes crowded in this marble tomb;
Death triumphs o'er the boasted state,
The vain distinctions of the great;
Here in one common heap they lye,
And eloquent, in silence cry,
Ambition is but vanity!
And see, this sculptur'd tomb contains
Of beauty the abhorr'd remains;
That face which none unmov'd could view,
Has lost th' enchanting rosy hue;
Those once resistless sparkling eyes
No more can heedless hearts surprise;
That form, which every charm could boast,
In loathsome rottenness is lost.
See there the youth, whose cheerful bloom
Promis'd a train of years to come;
Whose soft address, and graceful air,
Had scarce obtain'd the yielding fair,

When Fate derides th' expected joys,
And all his flatt'ring hope destroys.
There sleep the birds, whose lofty lays
Have crown'd their names with lasting praise;
Who, though eternity they give,
While heroes in their numbers live;
Yet these resign their tuneful breath,
And wit must yield to mightier death.
Even I, the lowest of the throng,
Unskill'd in verse, or artful song,
Shall shortly shroud my humble head,
And mix with them among the dead.

I am now reconciling myself to these gloomy abodes. I would grow familiar, I would contract an intimacy with death, in order to meet the grisly phantom without consternation.

But what I am here contemplating, is only the dark side of the prospect, which disappears whenever my thoughts turn to the bright reverse. Death is then no more a meagre skeleton, followed with a train of terrors, but comes in an angel's form, with a gay retinue of heavenly loves and graces; he comes the kind messenger of my liberty and happiness, with a smiling aspect, beckoning me away from these stormy regions, to the worlds of unclouded light. The scenes of immortality are opened before me; the palm, the starry crown, with all the bright rewards of virtue, appear in view. Oh, when will the happy period come, which ends this mortal story! But my friendship for you shall outlive the date of this transitory existence, and be the same when I am no more, after the formalities of this lower world.

Your humble servant,

Theophilus.

LETTER X.

To Lady ——— from a Sylph.

YOU will find this letter on a bank of violets, where I have often the pleasure to seat myself near you unseen; and never fail of being entertained with that vivacity, and innocent wit, that sparkles in your conversation. However negligent you are of your invisible admirer, your earliest part of life has been my care: my services claim the pre-eminence of all my mortal rivals, and give me a right to make my pretensions, before your heart admits an earthly passion.

I have followed your early rambles over the flowery lawns, guarded you on the verge of murmuring streams, and screened your beauty from the sultry noon. I have fanned you with my golden plumes, and breathed the fragrance of the spring about you. By me the music of the groves has been improved, while I have joined with the feathered chorus to divert you: the nightingale, for you, has prolonged her melodious strain, and from some flowery spray entertained you with her nightly serenade.

These harmless gallantries, instead of molesting, have indulged your tranquillity; for mine is an affection suited to your guiltless inclination, and consistent with the most refined virtue. Indeed, this is the superior charm, the powerful attraction, that has gained you a celestial lover; those divine graces, those sparklings of goodness and generosity, that sacred impression of virtue Heaven has stamped on your soul, charm me beyond your lovely person; and yet I view your blooming beauty with delight, and find a guiltless transport in your smiles. I am captivated with those looks of benevolence and peace, which scatter universal joy and alacrity about

you. The guiltless gaiety of your temper, and inoffensive wit divert me. I love to mimic the sweetness of your voice, and repeat the charming accent in a thousand sportive echoes.

Were not the view of ethereal beauty forbidden to any of mortal race, I might insult all human vanity, and defy the most glorious rival among the sons of men. Was I permitted to appear in the rosy bloom of celestial youth, with my golden zone, my purple-wings, and glittering tiara, I should outshine the most splendid birthnight-beau.

But I am not permitted to convince you of my superiority, till your date of mortal life is expired; and then, if you continue stedfast to the rules of virtue, you shall be mine by all the engagements of celestial love. I will lead you in triumph to the blissful fields, and charming bowers, surpassing the most poetical description of Cyprian groves, or Hesperian gardens. What you call palaces, and magnificent seats, are but dens, but dwellings in the dust, compared to the dazzling habitations of the aereal race. The region is for ever calm, the skies for ever unclouded.

No stormy winter enters there,
'Tis jovial spring through all the year.
Soft gales through groves of myrtle blow,
The streams o'er golden pebbles flow;
Fresh Youth and Love their sportive train
Lead o'er the ever-verdant plain;
Ethereal forms in bright array
Along the blissful current stray;
Or wander through Elysian groves,
Or banquet in the gay alcoves;
And oft in Amaranthine bow'rs,
Repose on fragrant beds of flow'rs,
While Music, with her soothing strains,
Warbles through all the woods and plains;
The hills, the dales, and fountains round,
With heav'nly harmony resound.

But numbers fail, human language loſes its energy, and grows inſipid, while I would paint the wonders of the immortal world; neither can I deſcribe, nor will you be able to conceive, theſe tranſporting ſcenes, till the happy time comes when they ſhall be unveiled in ſurpriſing pomp before you. Till then, I am

Your inviſible admirer,

Ariel.

LETTER XI.

To Euſebius.

IT is with great pleaſure I obey you, in diſcovering the preſent ſituation of my thoughts; ſince the tranquillity I enjoy in this retirement, is partly owing to thoſe pious principles you endeavoured to inſtil into my early youth.

You was well informed of my paſſion for Lady Diana ——; nor can you have forgot how many excuſes I framed to my father, to prevent his deſign of ſending me into foreign parts, till all events ſucceeded to my wiſh, and I was married to the charming maid. But the nuptial pomp was hardly paſt before death blaſted my happineſs, and ſnatched the lovely prize from my arms.

The only way I could then think of, to divert the violence of my grief, was travelling; hoping, by a variety of objects, to efface the painful impreſſion. Accordingly, I made the tour of France and Italy, amuſing myſelf with whatever was grand or entertaining. I converſed with men of ſenſe and merit, and ſometimes was favoured with the ſociety of women of diſtinguiſhed beauty and reputation; I indulged myſelf in all the little gaieties of life within the limits of reaſon and morality: but nothing could blot the image of my charming wife from my ſoul. I brought back my affection for the fair de-

parted saint to the mournful mansion where I enjoyed and lost her.

But here, leisure and reflection had a better effect than a thoughtless series of diversions. Though my course of life had always been regular, and governed by the rules of sobriety; yet till now I was a stranger (except in form) to any thing of devotion; nor had ever experienced the ineffable satisfaction of a virtuous mind in its secret addresses to the Supreme Being. My soul had not yet reflected on its own grandeur, nor considered itself formed for an infinite and unchangeable felicity.

Those grave and sublime authors which were once the useless ornaments of my library, are now my serious entertainment. By these I have been directed to look beyond all the perishing scenes of nature, to that immutable state of happiness, which, after a short probation, attends the practice of virtue. My thoughts grow calm, my passions appeased, the goods and evils of time vanish into nothing, at the prospect of boundless and immortal pleasure.

The great temple of the skies, the spangled arch of heaven, is frequently the place of my devotion; the open view of the gay creation, or the lonely solitude of a wood, inspire me with a sacred warmth. But oh! when the propitious Divinity, by some divine emanation, makes me sensible of his presence, with what contempt do I look back on the lessening world! How tasteless, how insipid are all its amusements! How calm, how peaceful, in those happy intervals, are the regions of my soul! its wishes are answered, and all its desires appeased. I have enough, I ask no more. Can they, languish for the streams, who drink at the overflowing fountain! His benignity is better than life; immortal pleasure is in his smiles; and whom he favours, must be necessarily blessed.

Thus abstract from human things, I converse with the great Spirit of the universe, and, in the rapture of my thoughts, often address him in such soliloquies as these.

" It is the dignity of my nature, oh Supreme " of beings, to adore and praiſe thee! But how " art thou to be extolled by mortal man? The lan- " guage of paradiſe, the ſtrains of immortality, fall " ſhort of thy perfections: the firſt-born ſons of " light loſe themſelves in bliſsful admiration, in " ſearch of thy excellency; even they with ſilent " ecſtacy adore, while, veiled with ineffable ſplen- " dor,

" The bright, the bleſt Divinity is known,
" And comprehended by himſelf alone.

" Who can conceive the extent of that power, " which, out of nothing, brought materials for a " riſing world, and, from a gloomy chaos, bid the " harmonious univerſe appear!

" Confuſion heard his voice, and wild uproar
" Stood rul'd, ſtood vaſt infinitude confin'd.
Milton.

" At thy word the pillars of the ſky were framed, " and its beauteous arches reared; thy breath kin- " dled the ſtars, adorned the moon with ſilver rays, " and gave the ſun its flaming ſplendor.

" Thy glory in her ſilent courſe the moon,
" And nightly lamps in their obſcure ſojourn,
" The morning-ſtar with its bright circlet crown'd,
" And early bluſhes of the day reveal;
" The circling ſun thy greatneſs manifeſts;
" Whether aſcending from the eaſtern wave,
" With glancing ſmiles he cheers the dewy fields;
" Or mounted to the zenith's lofty height,
" He blazes with tranſcendent glory round;
" Or down the ſteep of heav'n he rolls amain,
" And ends his flaming progreſs in the ſea;
" From eaſt to weſt thy grandeur he proclaims,
" And thro' his radiant kingdoms ſpreads thy praiſe.

"Thou didſt prepare for the waters their capa-
"cious bed, and ſet bounds to the raging billows;
"by thee the hills were crowned with plenty, and
"the vallies dreſſed in their flowery pride; the ſum-
"mer and winter, the ſhady night, and the bright
"revolutions of the day, are thine: in all the won-
"derful effects of nature, we adore and confeſs thy
"power.

"Thou rid'ſt upon the wild tempeſtuous wind,
"And flying ſtorms obey thy potent voice;
"Sublime on clouds thy dark pavilion ſet,
"With ſhades and gloomy majeſty involv'd;
"Thy hands the pointed light'nings lance around,
"While peals of thunder ſhake the firmament;
"At thy approach the kindling foreſts ſmoke,
"And from their baſe the trembling mountains
"ſtart,
"The rivers ebb and flow at thy command,
"Obſerve their wonted courſe, or run reverſe;
"At thy rebuke the frighted waves divide,
"And with ſtupendous motion backward roll
"Their cryſtal volumes to their inmoſt ſpring.
"Thou all things canſt, thy mighty mandate heard,
"Neceſſity and nature are no more:——
"Th' obedient elements reſign their league,
"And wonderful effects atteſt the God."

Theſe, my dear friend, are the entertainments that brighten my ſolitude, and free my ſoul from its former engagements: thoſe fading graces, on which I once doted, vaniſh before a ſuperior excellence, as ſtars before the riſing ſun: inſtead of repining, I adore, I juſtify the great diſpenſing Power, that has removed the darling of my affections to fix them on immortal beauty, I have loſt nothing amiable or attractive, but what is found with divine advantage in the fair Original.

I know you will congratulate me on this happy change. It muſt pleaſe you to find that your pious

instructions, joined to the ſanctity of your example, have not been entirely loſt on,

Reverend Sir,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

Aminton.

LETTER XII.

To the ſame.

SIR,

I Have obeyed your commands, in ſending the incloſed. You will not require an apology, for an eſſay on this tranſporting ſubject. Joy and gratitude will ſpeak, however diſproportioned the expreſſions.

On our SAVIOUR's Nativity.

Victorious Love! how uncontroul'd thy pow'r!
How great thy triumph, on that glorious hour!
The high-rais'd thrones above look'd down to ſee
The vanquiſh'd God a captive led by thee.
His ſplendor in mortality diſguis'd,
The principalities of heav'n ſurpris'd
Th' indulgent ſkies ſmil'd on the happy birth,
While peace and joyful wonder huſh'd the earth.
Fly rigid winter, with thy horrid face,
And let the ſoft and lovely ſpring take place;
Oh! come, thou faireſt ſeaſon of the year,
With garlands deck'd, and verdant robes appear;
At once produce the Summer's various coſt,
Whatever ſweets her flow'ry ſtores can boaſt:
Full caniſters of Sharon's roſes ſpread,
And dreſs with art th' illuſtrious infant's bed;

Rifle the gardens, ſearch the painted fields,
For all the blooming glories nature yields.
But, O ye products of the earth! how poor,
To heav'ns enamell'd plains, are all your ſtore!
Perpetual greens, and never-fading flow'rs,
Enrich with ſoft perfumes th' immortal bow'rs;
And yet he left the bright ethereal ſeats,
For theſe cold regions, and obſcure retreats.
Be hush'd, ye winds, no angry tempeſts rove;
But ſink in gentle whiſpers through the grove:
With all Arabia load your balmy wings,
And breathe the fragrance of ten thouſand ſprings.
Begin, ye ſweet muſicians of the air!
Let nature all her ſoothing ſounds prepare;
Let tuneful Art her tuneful meaſures bring,
Each melting tone, and ev'ry warbling ſtring:
Let pſalt'ries, harps, and the loud cymbal ring:
Let the ſhrill trumpets raiſe their ſprightly voice,
While Carmel, and high Lebanon rejoice.
He comes, O Jacob, thy long promis'd king!
Celeſtial envoys the glad tidings bring:
O'er earth's wide compaſs to the diſtant main,
With truth, and perfect juſtice, he ſhall reign,
The ſparkling ſkies ſhall tarniſh and decay,
The ſun be quench'd, the ſtars ſhall fade away;
But he ſhall riſe with a propitious light,
Stand at high-noon, and ſhine divinely bright.

I ſhall now leave you to your own ſublimer contemplation on this unbounded theme, and ſubſcribe myſelf

Sir,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant

Aminter.

LETTER XIII.

To a gentleman in France, from his ſiſter; giving him a relation of her lover's misfortunes.

My dear brother,

AS my paſſion for Valerius had in its beginning your approbation, you will not blame my conſtancy at a juncture when the unhappy youth has no other conſolation. His misfortunes have brought thoſe virtues into view, which in the height of proſperity he never found occaſion to exert; and as his merit riſes, you will not reproach me, in finding my attachment to him more ſteady and reſolved than in the ſplendor of his fortune.

You know how much my father piques himſelf on his quality, and how averſe he was, when you left us, to Valerius' propoſal, on no other account but his being a citizen, though a man of great virtue and wealth. However, this laſt motive, after ſome deliberation, prevailed. It was ſuffered to receive his addreſſes, and every thing was preparing to celebrate the marriage.

Valerius had always behaved himſelf in ſo obſequious a manner to his father, that he put a conſiderable ſtock into his hands, which the young merchant had improved by two or three ſucceſsful voyages into Turkey; ſo that it was in his power to make a ſettlement vaſtly above my fortune, and far beyond my father's expectation. But, while the lawyers were buſy in drawing up the articles, an unexpected misfortune put a ſtop to the whole affair.

The father of Valerius was an honeſt man, but exceeding credulous; and was (unknown to his ſon) drawn into many engagements for the debts of an extravagant brother, to whoſe intereſt the compaſ-

fionate old man was too much attached. He ſoon found his error, being ſurpriſed with ſeveral arreſts on his brother's account, for more than his whole eſtate could anſwer.

The unhappy youth was quickly informed of his father's diſtreſs, and flew to his relief with all the ſpeed that filial piety could give. One of their friends who was preſent, told me, there never was a more moving interview. After a long pauſe of ſilent ſorrow, the old gentleman charged his ſon not to involve himſelf in any any ſtraits on his account, but leave him to ſuffer the effects of his own imprudence.

"I know (continued he) the happineſs of your "life depends on your marriage with the gentle Le- "mira, which will be entirely fruſtrated by your "being concerned in this affair; nor is your whole "fortune ſufficient to diſengage me from this con- "finement; but death will ſoon bring me a full diſ- "charge from a perplexity, into which my too great "credulity, and ill-placed compaſſion has betrayed "me. Yet this, and any thing I can endure with "fortitude, rather than you ſhall ruin your own "fortune to extricate mine. Pray leave me, (ſaid "he;) the concern your looks diſcover, is at pre- "ſent my heavieſt affliction."

The ſorrowful youth immediately withdrew; and, ſend ng for all the creditors, found that his whole ſtock, except what was at ſea, added to his father's, would hardly do juſtice to many honeſt traders demands, who muſt be ruined, with their families without ſatisfaction. But to whatever exigence he reduced himſelf, he reſolved to diſcharge his father; which he ſoon accompliſhed by a handſome compoſition.

Valerius' whole dependence now was on the return of the Turky fleet, where he had conſiderable effects. But my father was ſo angry with him for engaging in his father's affairs, that he forbid me ever ſeeing or thinking any more of him as a lover.

Nor did the torrent of his adverſity ſtop here; for within a few days he had intelligence, that two ſhips belonging to him, richly laden, were in their return taken by a Spaniſh pirate.

I was ſoon informed of this diſaſter, and writ immediately to Valerius, in the ſofteſt language that a paſſion like mine could dictate; and (to conceal nothing from you) I offered to marry him, and put into his poſſeſſion that part of my fortune which was left by my aunt, entirely in my own power. If you ſhould condemn this romantic inſtance of affection in me, you will certainly approve the conduct of my young philoſopher, who, in this criſis of love and adverſity, could act with ſuch compoſure and true greatneſs of mind, as you will find expreſſed in the following letter.

"*To Lemira.*

"THE diſtreſs I am in, too generous Lemira, "has not reduced me to ſuch an abject diſpo- "ſition, as, by accepting the offer you make me "of your fortune, to betray you into a ſtate of ne- "ceſſity and contempt, on ſo low a motive as my "own intereſt. Far be ſuch a ſelfiſh view for ever "from my ſoul! You wrong me, and your own "charms, if you think the paſſion they have inſpi- "red, will ſuffer me to act any thing unbecoming "its grandeur. However my fortunes are ſunk, "my mind keeps its native elevation, and is un- "tainted with any ſelfiſh or mercenary deſign. If "I loved you leſs, I might perhaps (abſtract from "your happineſs) purſue my own, and leave you "at leiſure to repent your raſhneſs, and curſe the "mercenary wretch that was the inſtrument of your "ruin.

"Your father has forbid you marrying me, on the "forfeiture of his bleſſing, and ſhall I rob you of "that, and bring the weight of a paternal curſe on

" your head! Shall I seduce you from the affluence " and splendor of fortune, to share in my distresses, " and struggle with the inconveniencies of low life! " Could I see you reduced to want and obscurity, " in hopes it might be a solace to my own misery; " and lessen my lot of human cares! No: let me " stand acquitted by heaven and earth of such base- " ness as this.

" Will you call this coldness? will you term it " indifference; and not rather the utmost effort of " affection, the triumph of a generous passion? Oh, " Lemira, you are dearer to me than life! next to " Heaven I love you, in parting with you, I aban- " don every earthly joy; I quit my whole share of " human happiness, and must sink into the last de- " jection, if religion did not support me with its " divine consolations.

" And here the morning seems to break, a gleam " of peace salutes me, some presaging hopes of a " prosperous catastrophe smile through the dark- " ness. Nothing is impossible to an almighty Power. " There are virtues to which Heaven has annexed " promises of a present retribution. It was in the " practice of the great duties of morality I fell into " this extremity; and here the divine veracity has " engaged itself to secure me. All events are in " the hands of the Sovereign Disposer; his will " makes nature and necessity; no obstacle puts a " stand to his designs, or obstructs the course of " providence perpetual beneficence has not dimi- " nished his stores, nor are the springs of his mer- " cy exhausted. I must own I have received some " consolation from the verses inclosed, which were " written by one of my friends in very distressed " circumstances. I must bid you an unwilling adieu.

" Yours, &c.

" *Valerius.*"

On the Divine Veracity.

BE hush'd, my griefs; 'tis his almighty will,
That rules the storms, that bids you all be still;
Be calm, ye tempests, vanish ev'ry care,
While with triumphant faith my soul draws near
To God in all the confidence of pray'r.
He has not bid me seek his face in vain,
Talk to the winds, or to the waves complain.
He hears the callow ravens from their nest,
By him their eager cravings are redrest;
Young lions through the desart roar their wants,
He marks them, and their wild petition grants;
The gaping furrows thirst, nor thirst in vain,
(Parch'd by the noon-day sun,) for timely rain;
With silent suits the fair declining flow'rs
Request, and gain, the kind refreshing show'rs:
And will th' almighty Father turn away,
Nor hear his darling offspring when they pray?
No breach of faithfulness his honour stains,
With day and night his word unchang'd remains;
The various ordinances of the sky
Stand forth his glorious witnesses on high;
Summer and winter, autumn, and the spring,
For him by turns their attestations bring;
Unblemish'd his great league with nature stands
And full reliance on his truth demands:
Nothing that breathes a second deluge fears,
When in the clouds the radiant bow appears.
Can the Most High like man at random speak,
Forfeit his honour, and his promise break?
Does he that falsely swears, his vengeance claim?
And shall he stain his own tremendous name?
The earth, the heav'ns, were witness when he swore
By his great Self; what would thy fears have more?
And had a greater than himself been found,
That greater had the high engagement bound.

Shall fleeting winds th' Almighty's words disperse,
Or breathing dust his solemn oath reverse?
Can he, like man, unconstant man, repent?
Shall any chance, or unforseen event,
Start up, his fixed purpose to prevent?
Or can he fail in the extended line
A stranger to his own extent of power?
What profit can a worm his Maker bring,
That he should flatter such a worthless thing?
Why should he condescend to mind my tears,
Or calm with soft deluding words my fears?
Can he (of perfect happiness possess'd)
Deride the woes that human life molest,
Or mock the hopes that on his goodness rest?
Nature may change her course, confusion reign,
And men expect the rising sun in vain:
But should the eternal truth and promise fail,
Infernal night and horrid must prevail,
The thrones of light would shake, the angelic
Would stop their harps amidst the blissful bow'rs:
No more the soft, the sweet melodious strain,
Would gently glide along the happy plain;
No more would tuneful hallelujahs rise,
And shouts triumphant fill the sounding skies:
Each heav'nly countenance a fuller air
Of grief and anxious diffidence would wear:
The golden palaces, the splendid seats,
The flow'ry mansions and the soft retreats,
The rosy shades, and sweet delicious streams,
Would disappear like transitory dreams.
Angels themselves their brightest hopes recline
On nothing more unchangeable than mine.
Am I deceiv'd? what can their charter be?
Seraphim may be deceiv'd like me,
If goodness and veracity divine,
Can fail, their heav'n's an airy dream like mine.
But, Oh! I dare the glorious venture make,
And lay my soul and future life at stake;

Be earth, be heav'n, at desp'rate hazard lost,
If here my faith should prove an empty boast!
Whate'er your arts, ye pow'rs of hell, suggest,
The truth of God undaunted I attest.
Produce your annals with insulting rage,
Bring out your records, show the dreadful page,
One instance where th' Almighty broke his word,
Since first the race of men his name ador'd;
In gloomy characters point out the hour,
Exert your malice, summon all your pow'r;
With rites infernal all your pomp display,
And mark with horror the tremendous day.
Confus'd, you search your dreadful rolls in vain,
Th' eternal honour shines without a stain;
Unblemish'd shines in men and angels view,
Just are thy ways, thou King of saints, and true!

I inclosed this letter my dear brother, to show you with what equality of mind the generous youth behaves himself in this distress. I beg you would hasten your return to England in compassion to

Your unhappy friend and sister,

Lemira.

LETTER XIV.

To Herminius.

I Have just reason to fear my essay on this noble subject will not answer your expectation. With whatever fluency I could express myself, when inspired by mortal beauty, the pomp of language fails me here; the boldest figures lose their emphasis, and grow insipid on this superior theme.

DIVINE LOVE.

FOR thee, fond Love, my darling theme,
My lime has oft been strung;
Thy pow'r, by ev'ry answ'ring stream,
In gentle notes I sung.
Laurinda taught my mose her art,
And fill'd with tender fire my heart;
She taught me how to paint thy beauteous face,
Thy charming form, and ev'ry moving grace.

But who shall guide the daring dream,
Celestial Love! that aims at thee,
Thou fairest offspring of the Deity?
I call the pow'rs of harmony in vain;
In vain the softest accents I employ;
The brightest metaphors in vain I chuse,
With all the melting language lovers use
To tell their pain, or speak their rising joy.
All the heights of pure desire,
Holy love, and heav'nly fire,
At once my panting breast inspire:
Such ardour smiling martyrs know,
When, defying ev'ry foe,
In triumph on to death they go,

Tell me, thou, for whom I prove,
All the fierce extremes of love,
How thy charms so far retir'd
From mortal sense, have all my bosom fir'd.
Greatness and fame, beauty and harmony,
Are all but empty names compar'd with thee.
Be thou but mine,
The whole creation I at once resign.

Vanish, thou earth, and ev'ry gaudy scene
Of hill and dale, or grove, or flow'ry field,
When by the spring adorn'd with cheerful green;
Vanish whate'er delights thou else canst yield:

Thou sun, be dark, and let eternal night,
Conceal thy vital splendor from my sight:
Thou moon, and ev'ry gay ethereal fire,
Burn out your golden store:
I shall be bliss'd when all your lights expire,
And earth, and sea, and skies shall be no more!

Place me where infernal night,
And endless horror reign;
Where banish'd far from hope and light
Unhappy ghosts complain:
Ev'n there, one gentle smile of thine
To' eternal gloom would chace;
Immortal day would on me shine,
And pleasure fill the place.

Should heav'n surround me with full tides of joy,
And open all its glories to my sight,
One frown of thine would all that heav'n destroy,
And wither my delight:
One frown of thine th' immortal groves would blast,
And darkness o'er the blissful regions cast.

You that sing in happy bow'rs,
And in unmingled pleasures pass the hours,
That know the height of heav'nly bliss,
Come, play me some soft air of paradise;
Gently strike your sweetest strings,
And touch my soul on all its tender springs,
While sitting on the music's downy wings,
I'll bid at once, mortality adieu,
And love and paint the sacred flame like you.

But, my dear Herminius, the present performance will convince you, that I have not yet learned the strains of immortality: and perhaps you will not think it necessary for me to make an apology for not being an angel. However if I can contribute to

your entertainment as a mere mortal, you may command

Your most humble servant,

Evander.

LETTER XV.

To Alonzo.

YOU have spent so many happy hours at the Earl of ——'s fine-seat in the country, that it is unnecessary to describe those beautiful scenes with which you are so well acquainted. Here I have passed a great part of the summer season, in a manner suited to my contemplative humour. Having no taste for country diversions, or any kind of rural sports, my pleasures were confined to the charming shades and gardens with which the house is surrounded.

Here I enjoyed an unmolested tranquillity, till a fit of curiosity led me to make an excursion into the wide champaign, that opened before me from the borders of the park.

If I begin with the rosy dawn, you will pardon my romantic style, in relating the surprising adventure. But, without telling a lye, the morning was yet dusky; the balmy dew, and fragrant gales perfumed the air with their untainted sweets; while, with thoughts free as the airy songsters that warble on the branches, I wandered from rising hills to winding vales, through flowery lawns to leafy woods, till I found myself under the shade of a venerable row of elms; which put me in mind of Sir Roger de Coverly's rookery. The aged trees shot their heads so high, that, to one who passed under them, the crows and rooks, which rested on their tops, seemed to be cawing in another region. I was delighted with the noise; while, with the Spectator,

I considered it as a kind of natural prayer to that being who supplies the wants of his whole creation. My thoughts were inspired with a pleasing gratitude to the benevolent Father of the universe, till the sequel of my devotion was interrupted by the sight of a beautiful girl about four or five years old, sitting on the grass, with a basket of flowers in her lap; which she was sticking in the snowy fleece of a little lamb that stood timidly by her.

I began to hope it was one of the fairy race, or some pretty phantom that haunted the grove. For the adjacent house, belonging to this reverend avenue, looked more like a dormitory for the dead than an habitation for the living. Every thing about it appeared ruinous and desolate. I could neither hear the voice, nor trace the steps of mortal men in this absolute solitude: nor had I any hopes of knowing into what wild region I was got, unless the pretty figure sitting on the grass could give me some intelligence.

I made my approaches very respectfully. But what was my surprise, in drawing near, to find the air, the complexion, every feature in miniature, of the ungrateful Aurelia, on whom I once so passionately doted! A thousand tormenting ideas rushed into my mind at the sight of this lovely creature, who smiled on me with the most inchanting innocence. While I stood eagerly gazing at her, which was not long, Aurelia herself entered the walk, and confirmed my suspicion, that this child was a living proof of her infamy.

It is about six years since she eloped from the public view, regardless of her own illustrious family, or the obligations she was under to the generous Clifton; who treated her with the utmost confidence, and was the last that suspected her husband's criminal affair with her. Be my own wrongs forgot, and all the contempt with which she trifled whatever proposals honour, and a disinterested passion, could make.

I found her now an object of pity, rather than resentment. The dejection of her mind was visible in her pale haggard looks, and the wretched negligence of her habit. I could hardly persuade myself this was the celebrated thing, that once appeared in all public places with such a parade of equipage and vanity.

She was in the utmost confusion at this interview; till, excusing myself, I told her this intrusion was undesigned, and purely the effect of chance, as I was taking a morning's ramble from the Earl of ——'s, where I had spent some time; and that she might depend on my word, not to discover her abode to any one in that family.

By this time she was a little composed; and invited me to rest myself after my walk. I followed her into the house, which looked more like the mansions of despair, than a retreat for a lady, of pleasure. An awful silence reigned in every room, through which I made a shift to find my way by a dim twilight, that glimmered through some windows of as antique a figure as those of an old abbey. The furniture, I fancy, has not been displaced from times immemorial; it looks more like unwieldy lumber, than any thing designed for use or ornament. There was nothing of a modern date, but a tea-table, and that in ruinous circumstances.

It was now about ten o'clock. Aurelia ordered tea and chocolate to be brought. All her attendance was a fresh-colour'd country lass; who withdrew as soon as we had breakfasted.

I was impatient to hear a relation of Aurelia's misfortunes; but durst not ask any question, for fear it would look like insulting her distress; only renewed my excuses for interrupting her privacy.

To which she replied, "That though I was the "last person in the world she should have chose to "be a witness of her infamy, yet she thought her-"self happy, in having an opportunity to make "some apology for her injustice to me, in refusing "those terms of honour I once offered, and com-

"plying with such reproachful conditions as has
"made her [illegible]
"[illegible]
"[illegible]
"[illegible]
"all that my dissolute lover [illegible]
"[illegible]
"[illegible]
"[

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Had some successful lover in the prime
Of equal years, but my'd me to a crime,
Resistless love had been my best defence,
And gain'd admittance for the last offence;
But while the author'd one had no such charms,
To tempt a blooming virgin to my arms,
I'm justly thought a prostitute for gold,
A mercenary thing to serve'd int'rest sold.
Be curs'd that female fiend, whose arrastis'd art,
With wanton tales, seduc'd my guiltless heart,
Let her with endless infamy be curs'd;
Of all the agents hell employs, the worst.
Perdition to herself the wretch inferr'd,
When she my youthful modesty allur'd.
Oh, fatal day! when, to my virtue's wrong,
I fondly listen'd to her flatt'ring tongue,
But, oh! more fatal moment, when she gain'd,
That vile consent which all my glory stain'd!
Yet Heav'n can tell, with what extreme regret,
The fury of thy lawless flames I met;
For, unexperienc'd in the ways of sin,
A conscious honour struggled still within.
Oh, could I! but the ill-tim'd wish is vain,
Could I my former innocence regain!
Thy proffer'd kingdom, Henry, were a prize,
Which balanc'd with that wealth, I should despise.
But I no more my sex's pride can boast;
Alas! what has one moment's madness cost!
Not Woodstock's charming bow'rs can ease my grief,
For I must fly myself to find relief.
Oft, while the sun in length'ning shades declines,
And through the waving trees more mildly shines,
Alone, through all the [illegible] walks I rove,
And hope the sweets of solitude to prove;
But, at my sight, each [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
A gloomy [illegible], and [illegible] [illegible] appears,
To bend its top, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] tears.
Methinks each painted blossom hangs its head,
Avoids my touch, and [illegible] where I tread.

If angling near a crystal brook I stand,
And with [illegible]
The cautious [illegible]
My heedless [illegible]
Amidst the garden, [illegible] by curious hands,
A noble statue of [illegible]
Naked she stands, [illegible]
And bathing in a silver [illegible]
When near the [illegible]
At me she [illegible]
What scenes, alas, can [illegible]
What joy can I in these [illegible]
For lawless and forbidden love [illegible]
In some obscure and melancholy cell,
Rather a weeping penitent I'd dwell,
Than here a glorious prostitute remain,
To all my sex's modesty a stain.
This stately lab'rinth, rais'd with vast expence,
Displays my shame in its magnificence.
As through the stately rooms I lately walk'd,
And with my woman of its paintings talk'd,
She spy'd the draught of Tarquin's wanton flame,
And heedless ask'd the injur'd beauty's name.
This (I reply'd) is that illustrious dame—
Renown'd for chastity I should have said:
But here a rising blush my face o'erspread.
Confus'd I stopp'd, and left th' inquiring maid.
Lucretia's story on my life had cast
A black reproach who yet can live disgrac'd.
I should, like her, with just resentment prest,
Have plung'd the fatal dagger in my breast.
What specious colours can disguise my sin,
Or still the restless monitor within?
Thy greatness, Henry, but [illegible] my shame,
And adds immortal scandal to my name:
My odious [illegible] disgrace,
The Clifford's [illegible]
To whose [illegible]
The terrors of a guilty mind to stine
In vain the sun its morning pride displays;
I turn my eyes, and sicken at its rays:

The silver moon, and sparkling stars, by night,
Torment me too with their officious light;
The glimm'ring taper round my chamber plac'd,
Across the room fantastic shadows cast;
Of all my dreams, the melancholy scene
Presents an injur'd, revengeful Queen:
Last night, when sleep my heavy eyes had clos'd,
To all her rage, methought, I stood expos'd!
Wild were her looks, a poison'd cup she brought,
And proudly offer'd me the fatal draught:
The destin'd bowl I took with trembling hands,
Compell'd to execute her fierce commands.
This dismal omen aggravates my fears,
Before my fancy still the furious Queen appears.

LETTER XVII.

Mary Queen of France, to Charles Brandon Duke of Suffolk.

The Princess Mary, Henry VIII.'s younger sister, being in love with the Duke of Suffolk, was, for public reasons, married to Lewis XII. of France, who died in few months after. The Queen being again at liberty, writes the following epistle to the Duke of Suffolk, her first lover.

An imitation of Drayton's epistle.

LET these soft lines my kindest thoughts convey,
And tell thee what I suffer by thy stay.
Did seas divide us, this might well excuse
Thy negligence, and my fond heart abuse:
But Calais from the English strand is seen,
A gentle current only rolls between.

Nor needs my Suffolk, like Leander, brave
A threatning death in ev'ry breaking wave,
When, guided only by a glimm'ring light,
He cross'd the stormy Hellespont each night.
Tall ships, with flying sails, and lab'ring oars,
Attend to land thee on the Gallic shores:
But thou art chang'd! that ardour is expir'd
Which once thy wishes with impatience fir'd,
When Savoy's blooming Dutchess strove in vain
From me the conquest of thy heart to gain.
Invited by great Henry's martial fame,
The haughty princess, with her brother, came
To compliment the King for Tournay gain'd;
Where, in a rich pavilion entertain'd,
Thy noble form th' unguarded fair surpris'd,
Nor were her tender wishes long disguis'd.
Whatever flatt'ry, love, or wanton art,
Could do, she practis'd, to seduce thy heart.
Great Antony, by such allurements gain'd,
For Cleopatra, all his glory stain'd.
But thy firm faith no injury receiv'd,
For you was just, or I was well deceiv'd.
Nor were my virgin-vows less true to thee:
When young Castile address'd the Court for me,
The charms of proffer'd empire I resign'd,
And all that could ambition move declin'd:
A softer passion had possess'd my mind;
And while unrivall'd in thy breast I reign'd,
My thoughts the lustre of a crown disdain'd.
But, ah! what changes human joys attend!
On airy chance our brightest hopes depend.
Victorious Henry's arms still meet success;
The vanquish'd Gauls at last propose a peace.
By Wolsey's policy their terms succeed,
And both the hostile nations are agreed,
While I the public victim am decreed;
Condemn'd to share the Christian Monarch's bed,
And curs'd with that magnificence I fled.
I know my rank on private choice allow'd,
And what a Princess to her country ow'd.

These splendid maxims should have sway'd my breast,
But love entirely had my soul possess'd.
How oft I wish'd my humble lot had been
Beneath the glorious hazard of a Queen!
That crown'd by rural maids with painted flow'rs,
I rang'd the fields, and slept in verdant bow'rs!
Belov'd of some young swain with Brandon's face,
His voice, his gesture, and his blooming grace!
In all but birth and state resembling thee!
Then unmolested had we liv'd, and free
From those unhappy turns which greatness brings;
While rocks and meadows, shades and purling springs,
The flow'ry valley and the gloomy grove,
Had heard of no superior name to love.
Such scenes of this inglorious life I drew,
And half believ'd the charming fiction true,
Till real ills dissolv'd the pleasing dreams;
The groves and vallies fled, the lawns and silver streams.
The gay fantastic paradise I mourn'd,
While courts and factions, crowns and cares return'd,
With sighs I still recall the fatal day,
When no pretence could gain a longer stay.
The lovely Queen my parting sorrow saw,
Nor Henry's presence kept my grief in awe;
No rules of decent custom could controul,
Or hide the wild disorder of my soul;
When slipp'd for France before the dancing wind
The navy fled, and left my hopes behind.
With weeping eyes I still survey'd the strand,
Where on a rising cliff I saw thee stand;
Nor once from thence my stedfast sight withdrew,
Till the lov'd object was no more in view,
Farewell, I cried, dear charming youth; with thee
Each cheerful prospect vanishes from me.
Loud shouts and triumphs on the Gallic coast
Salute me; but the noisy zeal was lost;
Nor shouts nor triumphs forc'd my least regard,
Thy parting sighs, methought, was all I heard.

But now at Abbeville by Lewis met,
I strove the thoughts of Suffolk to forget:
For here my faith was to a monarch vow'd,
And solemn rites my passion disallow'd:
However pure my former flames had been,
Unblemish'd honour made them now a sin.
But scarce my virtue had the conquest gain'd,
And ev'ry wild forbidden wish restrain'd,
When at St Denis, with imperial state
Invested, on the Gallic throne I sat;
The day with noble tournaments was grac'd,
Your name among the British champions plac'd.
Invited by a guilty thirst of fame,
Without regard for my repose you came.
The lists I saw thee enter'ring with surprise,
And felt the dazzling glances of thine eyes.
Ye sacred Powers, (I cried,) that rule above!
Defend my breast from this Perfidious love.
Ye holy lamps! before whose awful lights
I gave my hand; and ye religious rites!
Assist me too; nor let a thought unchaste,
Or guilty wish, my plighted honour blast:
While passion struggling with my pious fears,
Forc'd from my eyes involuntary tears.
Some tender blossom thus, with leaves enlarg'd
Declines its head, with midnight dew o'ercharg'd:
The passing breezes shake the gentle flow'r,
And scatter all around a pearly show'r.
From this distracting hour I shunn'd thy sight,
And gain'd the conquest by a prudent flight.
But human turns, and sov'reign destiny,
Have set me now from these engagements free.
The stars propitious to my virgin love,
My first desires, and early vows approve;
While busy politicians urge in vain,
That public reasons should my choice restrain;
That none but York's or Lancaster's high race,
Or great Plantagenet's, I ought to grace.
Nor Suffolk wants a long illustrious line,
And worth, that shall in future records shine.

They own'd thy valour, when thy conqu'ring lance
Carry'd the prize from all the youth of France.
Thy merit Henry's constant favour shows,
And envy only can my choice oppose.
Thy noble presence, wit, and fine address,
The British and the Gallic court confess.
Alencon's shape, and Vendome's sparkling eye,
Count Paul's gay mien, and Bourbon's majesty,
No longer are admir'd when thou art nye.
There nothing wants to justify my flame,
The statesmen grant but a poor empty name.
And what's the gaudy title of a King?
What sort of bliss can royal grandeur bring?
When thou art absent, what's the Court to me,
But tiresome state, and dull formality?
This toy, a crown, I would resign, to prove
The peaceful joys of innocence and love.

LETTER XVIII.

Penelope to Ulysses.

From Ovid.

DIstracted with his stay, yet still the same,
True to her ancient vows, and early flame,
Penelope salutes her absent king.
Oh! would himself at last an answer bring!
Proud Troy is fall'n, our Grecian virgins hate:
Yet not th' unrivall'd riches of her state,
Nor all the glories of her monarch's throne,
Can for the pains thy absence gives atone.
Oh! had the waves that gently wafted o'er
The lustful Phrygian to the Spartan shore,
Plung'd in the deep the guilty load they bore!
Abandon'd then I should not waste away,
In unavailing moans the lazy day:

Or lost to joy, and widow'd of delight,
Curse the dull lagging hours of the more tedious night.
Fruitful of doubts, my love still fear'd for you
Dangers unknown, and greater than the true.
I thought all Troy conspir'd against thy head,
And Hector's name, but mention'd, struck me dead.
Trembling I heard of false Achilles slain,
And wept to find the bold deceit was vain.
Tlepolemus fell by the Lycian spear,
Tlepolemus renew'd my anxious care.
In short, at ev'ry Grecian hero's fall,
Thro' the long war, before the fatal wall,
A thrilling coldness ran through every part,
Chill'd up my blood, and shudder'd at my heart.
But my chaste passion mov'd the pitying skies;
My Lord is safe, and Troy in ashes lies.
With prosp'rous gales the Argive chiefs return,
And to their country gods Barbaric incense burn.
The wives in pious gifts declare their joy.
While their sav'd husbands tell the fate of Troy:
Old men and frighted virgins, fix'd around,
In dumb amazement dwell upon the sound:
The soldiers in gay feasts their cares compose,
And mark in wine the scenes of ancient woes.
This is Sigæum, here swift Simois flow'd,
There high erect old Priam's palace stood;
Here fierce Pelides urg'd the dreadful war,
There fix'd the bleeding Hector to his car:
There mov'd Ulysses, certain of success,
Greater his conduct, nor his courage less:
'Twas Nestor told us all; he told us too
The arts that Dolon and the Thracian slew.
Heedless, and too forgetful as you were,
In you, I'm sure, 'twas criminal to dare:
When you but for one faithful friend alone
Dealt fate to squadrons, and provok'd your own,
How well your wife and infant left behind,
How well your tender passion fill'd your mind!
I fainted as I heard the dreadful tale;
Scarce your success could o'er my fears prevail.

But what success, what's ruin'd Troy to me,
Or all the savage joys of victory,
If still unblest'd I sink beneath my pain,
And never must enjoy my Lord again!
For other wives deflow'r'd, to me still stands
The wall erected by immortal hands,
Now plenteous harvests grow where Ilium stood,
The soil well fatten'd with the natives blood,
O'er ruin'd palaces that reach'd the skies,
Low spires of grass, and humble shrubs arise.
Still of the conqu'ror's absence I complain,
Nor know what distant worlds my wand'ring Lord detain.

Ulysses! of every ship require,
The fallows with repeated questions tire:
Hopeless and half-despairing yet I write;
The cruel powers, that envy me delight,
May bring at least my letters to your sight.
To Pylos, ancient Nestor's fruitful reign,
And Sparta's injur'd court, I sent in vain;
For nor from Sparta, nor from Pylos came,
Ought save wild rumours, and uncertain fame.
Again I wish'd Troy's lofty tow'rs might rise,
And curse the thoughtless vows that gain'd the skies.
War's hazards then would be my only care;
And I in common with a thousand fear;
Now all the dangers of the land and seas
Are present to my thoughts, and hamper ease;
While you, alas! perhaps with pleasure rove,
And faithless nourish a forbidden love;
Take some deluding harlot to your breast,
And in her arms with lawless transports blest'd,
Make my dull easy constancy your jest.
Ye pow'rs! avert the thought I cannot bear,
And give my vain suspicions to the air;
Whate'er may be the reasons of thy stay,
Oh! may'st thou never willingly delay.
Me to a second choice my fire invites,
Chides my delays, and urges all his rights;
Still let him urge, my love my faith assures,
I am, I must, I will be ever yours.

Yet my warm pray'rs the good old monarch move,
He views my tears, and mourns my hapless love.
But a vile train of thoughtless youths proclaim
With lawless impudence a fancy flame.
Hither from Zante and Samos they resort,
And revel unmolested in thy court.
Treasures, the purchase of thy blood, they seize:
Those spoils Eurymachus, Pylander these;
Antinous here with equal rage possess'd,
There greedy Polybus, a constant guest,
Plunder around—And need I name the rest,
Who in your absence on our vitals prey,
And waste in costly luxury the day?
The beggar Irus, a detested name,
And base Melanthus last, complete thy shame.
'Gainst these insults what force can I employ!
What thy old father, or thy tender boy?
For his dear life a thousand snares are laid,
And certain ruin aim'd at his unguarded head.
Preserve him, Heaven! and if we ne'er must join,
Yet may he live to close your eyes and mine.
In vain Laertes does his power oppose,
Unfit for war, against surrounding foes.
Telemachus will soon to fame aspire,
Now his soft years a parent's aid require.
Oh! thou, our only hope and refuge, come,
Dispel our dangers, and avert our doom;
Form the young hero in the arts of war,
To rival thee, but with more caution dare.
Haste, and relieve your sire, with years oppress'd;
Once more he longs to clasp you to his breast,
Then shake off tedious life, and sink to rest.
Oh! haste to me!——A little longer stay
Will every grace, each fancy'd charm decay;
Increasing cares, and time's resistless rage,
Will waste my bloom, and wither it to age;
Yet at thy sight wild joys, and sprightly love,
Shall dying youth recall, and every charm improve.

Six Letters from Laura to Aurelia.

Giving an account of her brother's criminal amour, and her own passion for the handsome hermit.

LETTER I.

COuld your importunity have prevailed with my brother to have left me in London, you had been free from the vexation that I shall certainly give you, by making you the confident of all my country-adventures; and I hope you will relieve my chagrin, by telling me what the dear, bewitching, busy world is doing, while I am idly lauguishing away my time in rural shades. How happy are you, my dear Aurelia! How I envy you the enjoyment of dust, of crouds and noise, with all the polite hurry of the *beau monde*!

My brother brought me hither to see a country-seat he has lately purchased. He would fain perswade me it is finely situated; but I should think it more finely situated in the Mall, or even in Cheapside, than here. Indeed I hardly know where we are; only that it is at a dreadful distance from the theatre royal in Drury-lane, from the opera, from the masquerade, and every thing in this world that is worth living for.

I can scarce tell you whether to direct your letters. We are certainly at the ends of the earth, on the borders of the continent, the limits of the habitable globe, under the polar star, among wild people and savages. I thought we should never have come to the end of our pilgrimage; nor could I forbear asking my brother, if we were to travel by dry land to the antipodes. Not a mile but seemed ten, that carried me from London, the centre of all my joys.

The country is my averſion; I hate trees and hedges, ſteep hills, and ſilent vallies. The ſatyriſt may laugh: but to me,

Green fields, and ſhady groves, and cryſtal ſprings,
And larks, and nightingales, are odious things.

I had rather hear London cries, with the rattle of coaches, than ſit liſtening to the melancholy murmur of purling brooks, or all the wild muſic of the woods. The ſmell of violets gives me the hyſterics; freſh air murders me; my conſtitution is not robuſt enough to bear it; the cooling zephyrs will ſnuff me into a catarrah, if I ſtay here much longer.

If theſe are the ſeats of the muſes, let them unenvied enjoy their glittering whimſies, and converſe with the viſionary beings of their own forming. I have no fancy for dryads and fairies, nor the leaſt prejudice to human ſociety; a mere earthly beau, with an embroidered coat, ſuits my taſte better than an aerial lover with his ſhining treſſes, and rainbow-wings.

The ſober twilight, which has employed ſo many ſoft deſcriptions, is with me a very dull period; nor does the moon (on which the poets dote) with all her ſtarry train, delight me half ſo much as an aſſembly-room illuminated with wax-candles. This is what I ſhould prefer to the glaring ſun in his meridian ſplendour. Day-light makes me ſick; it has ſomething in it ſo common and vulgar, that it ſeems fitter for peaſants to make hay in, or country laſſes to ſpin by, than for the uſe of people of diſtinction.

You pity me, I know, dear Aurelia, in this deplorable ſtate. The whole creation is a blank to me, it is all joyleſs and deſolate. In whatever gay images the muſes have dreſſed theſe ruſtic abodes, I have not penetration enough to diſcover them: not the flowery field, nor ſpangled ſky, the roſy morn, or balmy evening, can recreate my thoughts. I am

neither a religious nor poetical enthusiast; and without either of these qualifications, what should I do in silent retreats, and pensive shades?

I find myself little at ease in this absence of the noisy diversions of the town. It is hard for me to keep up my spirits in leisure and retirement. It makes me anxiously inquisitive what will become of me when my breath flies away. Death, that ghastly phantom, perpetually intrudes on my solitude; and in some doleful knell from a neighbouring steeple, often calls upon me to ruminate on coffins and funerals, graves and gloomy sepulchres. These dismal subjects put me in the vapours, and make me start at my own shadow; nor have I acquired any great degree of fortitude by turning freethinker, and unlearning

"All that the nurse and all the priest have taught."
Mr Pope.

You have been too often of our party, not to know my brother is a very infidel. He has a sort of vanity in making me a proselyte, and freeing my mind from those prejudices (as he calls them) and superstitious notions, which govern a great part of the world. But as he finds me a little unwilling to resign my immortality, he has furnished me with a system of transmigration, and the eternal wandering of the soul from one species of being to another.

However, I do not find myself a gainer by renouncing my creed, which allowed me to hope, that, after the period of this mortal life, I might be an angel, or at least equal to those bright essences.

But by this fantastic scheme, to which my brother is making me a convert, my pretensions are sunk: the utmost I can expect, when I have shifted my present existence, is, to grin in a monkey, or look demure in a broad-faced owl, or to sit a chattering magpye in a bush. It is a chance among which of the animal race I am to be numbered; whether I

shall mount the air with the winged inhabitants, or crawl on the earth among my brother reptiles, or graze in the meadows with the horned tribe. Indeed I have no great stomach to grass or hay, and as little inclination to sleep in a den, or stretch my hairy bulk on the dewy plain: but as it is yet uncertain, whether I am to stalk or fly, or swim, I am still at a loss which of these various clans to greet as my next kindred.

However, I am better pleased with being what I am, than any thing else. I had rather be a celebrated toast, fluttering at a ball among beaux and pretty fellows, than the most gaudy butterfly hovering with painted wings over a bed of tulips. If this should be my ensuing fate, it will be a mortifying descent from a goddess to an insect.

And really there is something so gloomy and uncomfortable in those prospects of futurity, that if I consider them much longer, I shall turn Christian again, in defiance of my brother, and a learned unbeliever his companion, who are perpetually ridiculing my concern about a visionary breather, as they term it.

Indeed this would be the least of my cares, were I not extremely at leisure; but as I am, it is impossible for me to avoid being solicitous what fate attends me, when I resign this transitory life: for I must certainly die, I am mortal beyond contradiction; this truth sits heavy on my soul; there is no flying its evidence, nor does this globe afford any amusement, to divert the gloomy reflection. If I should turn devotee, you would think it a more wonderful metamorphosis than any I have named. But in all changes I am constantly

Yours, &c.

Laura.

P. S. I have a secret to tell you concerning my brother, which you shall know in my next letter;

for I am as impatient to discover it, as you can be to hear it.

LETTER II.

I Have too much confidence in my dear Aurelia, to conceal any thing from her; nor can it be an injury to my brother to trust you with his character, and know him to be as great a libertine in his practice as his principles.

But in whatever freedoms he has indulged himself, I must own he has always endeavoured to give me a just sense of honour, and the decorum due to my sex. While he has taken pains to free me from the restraints of religion, he has left nothing unsaid on other motives, that might raise in me the tenderest concern for a clear reputation. Which made me the more resent his scandalous conduct, when I found he had a mistress in his house, whom he had sent hither two or three days before we came. I knew not what to do nor how to behave myself in this exigence, till I found she was rather an object of compassion than reproach; and that she came hither, not to indulge an infamous amour, but to shelter herself from want, and the resentment of her relations.

She told me the story of her misfortunes, as well as the distress and confusion she was in would permit; and asking me a thousand pardons, ingeniously owned she had engaged my brother to bring me with him, or not to follow her.

I found her education had been strictly modest, and that she was unacquainted with the vitious part of the world. She is hardly sixteen; her name Charlotte; the only child of a noted citizen, who was utterly ruined in his affairs by a crafty Jew. From the height of credit, the unhappy man found himself sunk into circumstances of disgrace and indigence.

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This was a melancholy turn to Charlotte; just in the vanity of youthful expectations, to find herself, from the affluence of fortune, so suddenly reduced to poverty and contempt. My brother (whom she had sometimes seen with her father, but knew nothing of his character) took this unfortunate crisis to tempt her with rich presents, and fair promises, to leave her friends, and retire to some private lodgings he had got for her.

In this distraction of affairs, her father being under an arrest, and all his effects seized, she was surprised into a compliance with my brother's proposal: nor did he give her time to reflect, or consult any of her relations; who soon got intelligence of this dishonour, and sent her a severe injunction to see their faces no more.

This cruel message, with the sad tidings of her mother's death that followed, and the full evidence that she was deluded by my brother with feigned promises of marriage, had almost proved fatal to her life; nor could any argument allay her sorrow till her distressed lover engaged never to ask any future favour of her, but what the nicest virtue may grant. On this condition, she consented to go to his new seat in the country; for indeed she has no other refuge. He has kept his promise; she lodges in my apartment, and is treated by him with as much decency as if she was his sister.

I never thought such a libertine would turn Platonic: it is an unusual refinement, and I believe, the first gallantry of this kind he ever practised. But he has an esteem, a tenderness for her, of which, by his dissolute manners, I always fancied him incapable.

Her behaviour is really modest; nor was there ever a more natural impression of truth and innocence, than appears in her face. Her too credulous temper, and unexperienced years, have betrayed her into this state of shame and misery; of which, though too late, she seems exquisitely sensible. Since

I began this letter, she came into my closet, and, with a flood of tears, begged me to contrive some way to free her from this dangerous place.

"But whether (she said) can I fly? My friends "will never receive me; nor have I the confidence "to meet their reproaches. My crime has sent a "tender mother weeping to her grave, it loads my "father's hoary head with a heavier weight of sor- "row than all his other misfortunes. Love was "not my excuse; I am yet a stranger to that pas- "sion: it was a cowardice, it was fear of poverty. "A criminal distrust of celestial Providence. I "should have begged, I should have starved, rather "than parted with my innocence, on such merce- "nary terms. However sincere my repentance is, "it can signify nothing with regard to the world. "The scandal will never be obliterated. I must "either face the public contempt, or waste my days "in a joyless obscurity. Put my condition in the "best light; would this false man, as he promised, "marry me; what opprobrious language, what "terms of infamy, must I expect, in his intervals "of chagrin! Besides this, the impiety of his con- "versation terrifies me, while I hear him make a "jest of those sacred subjects for which I have been "taught the highest veneration. I should live hap- "pier with a wild American."

I made no reply; the reasoning was too just to admit a contradiction. But this melancholy instance makes me more than ever resolved not to surrender, nor even capitulate, on any terms, but those of a lawful English wife. Adieu.

Laura.

LETTER III.

WHat mutable things we are! You will be surprised to hear I am grown fond of the country, and have acquired a relish for its harmless

delights. I can talk to an echo, or liſten with great attention to a purling ſtream. I am in a fair way to make garlands, invoke the muſes, and write paſtorals. Since you heard laſt from me, I have met with an agreeable adventure that has given a ſort of romantic turn to my imagination.

As I was taking my conſtant diverſion of riding on the downs, the evening being exceeding pleaſant, I wandered ſome miles beyond my uſual limits, till I came in ſight of a venerable pile of building, which could be diſtinguiſhed from a church by nothing but the want of a ſteeple; every thing about it had an air of grandeur and antiquity. At ſome diſtance from the houſe there was a thick wood, with ſeveral fine walks cut through it.

I had a great inclination to ramble in thoſe agreeable ſhades; and alighting, ordered my footman to wait at the place where I left him. It was not long before I came to the centre of the foreſt, in which was a large graſs-plot of a circular figure, with a double row of high elms growing in the ſame form round it. In the middle of the green was a little mount, that, by eaſy ſteps of turf, had a winding aſcent to the top; where ſtood an arbour of jeſſamine, woodbine, and roſes, twiſted together with a ſort of elegant diſorder. The gaudy bloſſoms pleaſed the ſight, while their mingled ſweets perfumed the ambient air. On the lower branches of the circling elms hung ſeveral gilt cages, with a variety of ſinging birds in them, which were now chanting their evening ſongs; while a muſical flageolet, in clear and ſhrill reſponſes, anſwered from the delicious arbour.

I began to think there were indeed ſuch things as inchanted foreſts and vocal groves, or that the great Spirit of nature was ſolacing itſelf in thoſe innocent abodes. However, female curioſity led me on, till I came to the charming bower; where I found a well dreſſed beautiful youth, of about ſeventeen, ſitting with a flageolet in his hand. His complexion

was a lively brunette, that disgraced the lily and the roses; his dark hair fell in large and graceful curls below his neck; nothing could be more elegant than his shape and feature; nor was there any meeting the splendour of his eyes, without being sensible of every darting glance.

I made some apology for my intrusion; which he answered with an easy natural civility. Nor could I perceive that my presence gave him the least surprise or confusion. He received me with perfect composure, nor seemed to have any manner of curiosity to know whence I came, or whether I was going; nor (to my great mortification) did he so much as ask whether I was a mortal or a goddess.

It gave me some uneasiness, I confess, to find myself no more an object of surprise, to one who perhaps had never seen any thing so fine in his life; for I was in a very rich habit, blazing with scarlet and gold. You cannot imagine how it humbled my vanity, to observe with what indolence and tranquillity the young insensible looked at me; and the more, because he did not seem to want wit or politeness. I was extremely vexed, that at three and twenty he should treat me with as much indifference and respect, as if I had been his great-grand-mother.

This sedateness gave me a curiosity to pry into his studies: for I saw books lye near the place where he sat. When I opened them, I found one was, *A discourse of the goverment of the passions*; the other, *A treatise of the immortality of the soul*. I had nothing to say on those grave subjects; but after some formal discourse of the fine situation of the place, I took my leave of it; the young philosopher attending me to the limits of the wood, where I left my servant; and there we parted, without any seeming reluctance on either side.

But I own I had a restless curiosity to know the history of this lovely youth, and to whom the house belonged. Nor was it long before I received satisfaction from a clergyman, that was riding the same

road with me. He said, "The mansion was Sir "Harry Lizzard's, a man of merit, and well ac- "quainted with the world; in which he was now "unreasonably disgusted, and grown solitary, on "the account of the death of his eldest son, for "whom he had given a very liberal education, and "with a generous allowance sent him into Italy; "where his time was spent in the most dissolute "manner; till being unhappily engaged with a "lewd woman, in a fit of jealousy he shot himself "through the head. This tragical event made Sir "Harry resolve to give his younger son a quite dif- "ferent education. Indeed his character is entire- "ly the reverse of his elder brother's: he is re- "markable for his early piety, and great proficien- "cy in all sorts of learning, having a very polite "and ingenious person for his tutor. But Philo- "cles, that is the younger gentleman's name, has "too great an allay of gravity for his early years, "and is of so retired a temper, that he is known "by the title of *The handsome hermit*, as he is in- "deed very handsome."

Here the clergyman left me, overjoyed with this intelligence. As soon as I got home, I related my adventure to Charlotte; who gave me but little attention, being, as I told you, in the utmost anxiety at the manner of life to which she was confined. I am,

Dear Aurelia,

Most sincerely yours, *&c.*

Laura.

LETTER IV.

Since you received my last letter, I have taken another ramble in Sir Harry Lizzard's forest. My brother knows nothing of this adventure. And the

first afternoon that I found him disengaged, I persuaded Charlotte to go with me; who was glad of any pretence to fly from her own gallant, though she expressed but little curiosity to see mine.

At the entrance of the grove, we left the servants to wait with our horses till we returned. In my first visit, I perceived, by Philocles' discourse, that, when the evening was fair, he constantly spent it in the charming bower; where we now found him reading Dr Young's *True estimate of human life*, with such attention, he did not immediately see us, and seemed surprised at the encounter.

It diverted me, to find his philosophy discomposed. I began to flatter myself, it was the effect of my charms. The hopes of such a conquest delighted me more than all my past victories. It gave a sudden vivacity to my thoughts; and resolving by my wit to secure the conquest of my eyes, I began, with great gaiety, to rally him on his recluse manner of life, and losing his gayest hours in a joyless solitude.

By this time the young Stoic had assumed his natural superiority: and, instead of replying, as I expected, in a gallant and modish strain, he talked to me of the satisfactions of virtue, the tranquility of the mind in the rectitude of its passions; themes which, from another person, would have composed me better than a dose of laudanum. But here,

"The grave rebuke,
"Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
"Invincible."

Like the fallen angel in Milton,

"Abash'd I stood,
"And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
"Virtue how lovely in her native shape!"

The glory that darted from his eyes, the agreeable

accent, the moving eloquence that flowed from thoſe roſy lips, commanded my whole attention. Had he preached a ſermon, I could patiently have liſtened to the blooming orator,

——————" From morn to noon,
" From noon to dewy eve, a ſummer's day."

Milton.

And yet I could not forbear ſometimes laughing at his gravity, and begging he would put himſelf into holy orders. But he was not to be rallied out of his ſobriety. Nor could I poſſibly draw from him that flattery, with which till now I had been addreſſed. He ſeemed rather to have an inclination to humble my vanity.

Charlotte, the whole time, ſat in a penſive ſilence, while the tears which ſhe ſtrove to conceal, would ſometimes drop from her eyes. Philocles, in every pauſe of converſation, ſurveyed her with looks that expreſſed great humanity: but I was in no diſpoſition to be jealous of any thing I looked on ſo inferior to myſelf.

However, my concern to conceal this affair from my brother, made me break off the converſation a little abruptly, that we might be at home at the uſual hour. As ſoon as ever we were got alone, I aſked Charlotte how ſhe liked the *handſome Hermit*. "Oh "(ſaid ſhe, with a tender emotion) that I had ne"ver ſeen him! Till now I was not ſenſible of the "injury this barbarian (your brother) has done me. "He has cut me off from all the lawful joys of life, "from the pleaſure of a reciprocal affection for a "man of worth and virtue. With my innocence "I loſt a right to that happineſs. What I am I a "proſtitute! a kept miſtreſs! your brother's——! "O infamy! your brother's wh——e!"

"If you had not been that (ſaid I) Charlotte, "you had been a beggar."

"O envied title! (she replied;) O glorious Poverty! thou hast been the choice of saints and heroes; Virtue has made thee her sanctuary, her peaceful retreat. I could have fed on wholesome vegetables, quenched my thirst at some crystal brook, indulged my harmless slumbers on the verdant turf, undisturbed with guilty fears. Pardon me (said she, recollecting herself) these passionate sallies. I find myself more than ever undone; condemned to waste my hours in sullen obscurity; in the pride of life, the bloom of soft desires, to languish in solitary despair! My conscience will not suffer me to gratify an unlawful passion; nor should any advantage (were my guilt a secret) persuade me to impose on a man of worth. I have been true even to this rake that has undone me, and frustrated all my hopes of a lawful happiness."

"That is my brother has spoiled your marriage, (said I.) But, dear Charlotte, why should that thought afflict you, who intend to pass your future time in penitence and retirement? Has the *handsome hermit* altered your pious resolutions?"

"No, (she replied;) he has rather confirmed them. Never had the cause of virtue a more resistless advocate. Methinks I see the beauty that lightened in his face; I hear the charming accent still. I felt the energy of his arguments; my soul gave its full assent to the celestial dictates. I wondered you could so often interrupt the graceful orator with your ill timed raillery. I could have listened to his lecture of morality till the midnight dews had fallen, till the stars had set."

"Dear Charlotte, (said I,) forgive this interruption; I find you are in love. My intention is entirely frustrated, of having your picture drawn as the Fair Penitent, with a lamp and prayer-book before you. I perceive you yet design to converse among sinful mortals. Will you go with me to

"morrow, to hear another lecture from the charming divine?"

"Rather (she replied) let me retire to the silent grave, to conceal my infamy. I would not deceive him with an air of innocence while I am conscious of my own dishonour. I know myself, this is the crisis of my misery; nothing can obliterate this secret sense of shame. I may retire from the public view, as it is my full resolution. But what is a resolution at sixteen? Without peculiar assistance from Heaven, I shall never conquer the dictates of love and nature. In this perplexity I must either marry some worthless wretch that knows my infamy, or deceive some man of merit to whom it is a secret."

Here she burst into a flood of tears, intreating me to write to an uncle she had, to receive her into his favour, and let her live privately in his family. This I promised; nor despair of prevailing. My concern for her makes me forget it is time to subscribe myself

Your humble servant,

Laura.

LETTER V.

CHarlotte, to her great satisfaction, has this morning left us, and is gone to her uncle; who was easily persuaded to receive her, after he was assured of the sincerity of her penitence. But I found it a harder task to prevail with my brother to resign the idol of his affections; though he lost nothing by her absence, but the pleasure of gazing on her.

I am in pain till you know the sequel of my adventure with Philocles; who since I writ last, has several times, by appointment, met me in the delicious bower: but still, to my great vexation, he appeared insensible of any tender impression. I could

discern nothing in his conversation, but a pious design to convert me to Christianity, and convince me of the folly of the new scheme to which my brother had made me a proselyte.

But the last time we met I observed a soft confusion in his looks, till, after a long pause, (which I had no mind to interrupt,) "I am going (said he) "to set myself in a very ridiculous light to one of "your character: but I am content to pass for an "enthusiast, till the event convinces you of the "truth of what I shall relate.

"If a domestic tradition may be credited, there "has no person died out of our family, but what "has had a warning of their approaching fate, by "hearing music passing through the house in the "dead silence of the night; which is heard by none "but the person concerned. My mother and sister "both foretold their own death from this presage. "I see you smile, (continued Philocles:) but I "have had the same warning, and am superstitious "enough to credit it. Last night some trifling dis-"order kept me waking; my thoughts, however, "were placid and serene: some verses I had heard "my sister repeat in her last sickness came fresh into "my memory.

"While night in solemn triumph reigns,
"Ascend my soul the heav'nly plains;
"Thy flight to those gay regions take:
"Angels and God are still awake.
"The smiling stars will light thy way
"To the gladsome realms of day:
"While drowsy men with idle themes,
"Fantastic joys, and airy dreams,
"Are entertain'd; do thou converse
"With heav'n, and heav'nly strains rehearse;
"Visit the peaceful climes above,
"And through the fields of pleasure rove;
"Forget the scenes of care and strife,
"And walk among the trees of life;

"Taste the rich fruits of paradise,
"And bathe in flowing streams of bliss:
"Solacid in those eternal springs,
"Lose ev'ry thought of mortal things.

"Just as I had repeated these verses, I was se-
"renaded by an invisible musician, with the sweet-
"est strains that ever delighted mortal ears. The
"harmonious echo seemed to pass from room to
"room, till it came into my chamber; where, af-
"ter a short space, it sunk away in a gentle ca-
"dence.

"I knew my obsequies were now sung, and
"heard the fatal summons without surprise. Death
"was a theme familiar to my thoughts, as I nei-
"ther expected or desired to reach the decline of
"life."

I listened to this story as to a fairy tale, or a sort of waking dream. As gravely as he told it, I could not forbear laughing.

"This, Madam, (said he,) is what I expected;
"but it will not make me less serious on a subject
"of such importance. You have often rallied me
"on a manner of life so unsuitable to my years.
"Perhaps it may be more the effect of reason than
"inclination. My brother's tragical end convinced
"me of the fatal effects of love, and made me re-
"solve never to admit that distracting passion to my
"breast. But whatever opposition I have made,
"my heart has not been insensible of your charms,
"nor with all my philosophy sufficiently guarded
"against the allurements of love and soft desire.
"Even now, when I find myself disengaged from
"every other care, I have the utmost solicitude for
"your happiness. I am distressed to leave you in
"this state of infidelity; for this is the last inter-
"view we shall have, unless I am permitted to make
"you a visit from the immortal regions, in order
"to convince you, that the hopes of Christianity
"are no delusion."

"This proposal (said I) charms me. There "would be no resisting such evidence. I hope you "will prove a ghost of honour, and not fail the af- "fignation; which on my side shall be punctually "kept, on condition you appear in open day-light, "and dressed in your celestial livery. With these "circumstances I may venture to promise you, nei- "ther to run away, nor fall into fits. The place "of your reception (though not perhaps suitable to "your future dignity) shall be a painted alcove, "fronting a walk shaded with limes at the end of "my brother's garden."

"The gaiety (replied Philocles) with which you "treat this subject, persuades me you have courage "enough to be as good as your word; which is the "last and only favour I have to ask. I must now "bid you farewell, and, in the retirement of my "closet, prepare to make my exit with a fortitude "becoming those sacred principles to which I have "adhered."

Here, with a tender confusion in his looks, he abruptly left the place, and gave me leisure to re- flect on the odd conversation that had passed. But as visionary as some part of it appears, I would fain believe the soft confession he made is no fiction: for I find myself excessively in love! But this shall be a secret to the young enthusiast, till he has got over this splenetic fit; which, as whimsical as it appears, gives me a secret uneasiness. He has certainly in- fected me with some religious panics. I have lost my taste for every kind of diversion. Company is modelling, and solitude tiresome. Self-reflection distracts me. Whether I look forward or back- ward, the prospect is all confusion. But I shall ex- pose myself, by owning these weaknesses to one of your character. Adieu, &c.

Laura.

LETTER VI.

OH, my Aurelia! I have surprising things to tell you! The lovely Philocles is dead. His presaces were too certain. About a week after our last interview, I heard the melancholy tidings, that Sir Harry Lizzard had lost his only son by a sudden death. The charming youth was impatient of mortality, and is gone to converse with his kindred angels.

You will wonder to hear me treat those subjects seriously which I have till now ridiculed. It is a change that I myself can hardly credit. I never imagined my inclinations were so tenderly engaged, nor that any kind of adversity could have made such an alteration on my temper.

After the first emotions of grief were over, I recollected the appointment we had made; but rather wished than believed such an interview possible. However, my mind was prepared for conviction. I began to reason with Cato,

——"If there's a power above,
He must delight in virtue;
And that which he delights in must be happy."

I found myself now interested in the truths of Christianity. The firm belief of a life everlasting would in this exigence have been my greatest consolation. My hopes and fears prevailed by intervals, and kept me in the most tormenting suspense, while I waited for the decisive hour. As soon as it came, without any consternation, I attended at the appointed place.

It was a charming retreat, where art and luxurious nature displayed their various beauties. The evening was still; the sun in golden splendor, descending to the western skies, glittered through the

trees. Every thing looked gay; new life and beauty appeared on all the vernal prospect; the plants put on a fresher green, the flowers displayed a brighter hue, and diffused ambrosial fragrancy. Nature seemed animated with a conscious joy, as glaciated at the approach of some heavenly power.

An unusual alacrity inspired my thoughts, and soothed my soul with a secret delight; while a soft melodious sound rising by just degrees, filled the region round with transporting harmony.

In the height of these agreeable agitations, as the rosy morning breaks from a cloud, the charming Philocles stood apparent before me. There was something in his aspect so serene and beneficent, such a sweetness and affability, that banished every thought of fear, and filled my breast with divine tranquillity. Ineffable pleasure sparkled in his eyes; youth in eternal triumph sat on his brow, and painted his face with a rosy bloom. His temples were circled with a wreath of celestial roses; which were mingled among his flowing hair with a sort of ornamental negligence.

After a short pause, he began with a voice that would have allayed the anguish of death, and charmed the wild discord into calm attention; every accent breathed celestial love and harmony, while he described the bowers of bliss, the soft recesses and mansions of immortal pleasure. But it is impossible for me to paint the beautiful ideas, or imitate the emphasis of his language. The powers of eloquence sat on his tongue, and commanded all the motions of my soul, which at that blissful period seemed enlarged in its superior faculties; every word was penetrating and significant, his manner perfectly graceful and transporting; in his descriptions I saw the glories, I felt the joys of immortality. But in the midst of my attention to the sparkling orator, I could not help observing, that he often cast his eye on the shadow of a dial, which was placed on the top of a little marble-pedestal, on which with a be-

coming gesture, he leaned with his right hand. I fancied his time was limited; for at the last glance I saw him cast on the dial, he vanished, and with him all my joys.

This momentary view of celestial beauty has obscured all earthly glory. Reviewing the fantastic scene of pleasure in my light, the vanities which lately amused me, have lost their charms; my thoughts are fixed on superior objects; a divine and immortal anthem inspires my soul; and determines all its motions. With the evidence I now have of a future existence, my notions of happiness are refined and enlarged; my hopes bright and unfurred.

Adieu, my dear Aurelia! I am not without hopes that this relation will have the same effect on your practice, as the heavenly vision has on that of,

Madam,

Your most humble servant,

Laura.

Amoret to Corfick.

From the black regions, from the mournful plains,
Where horror in eternal triumph reigns:
From the low caves of hell, the cells of night,
Far from the frontiers of celestial light;
This from the wretched Amoret receive,
And at my cost these dreadful truths believe:
That 'tis no fiction pious men adore,
But there's indeed a just Almighty Pow'r;
That human spirits after death survive,
And to interminable ages live;
That fields of light, and blest ethereal plains,
Are no conceits of visionary brains;
But there are happy bowers, and shades of love,
With pure exhaustless springs of joy above;
Immortal crowns the virtuous to reward,
And glorious triumphs for the just prepar'd.

Nor question the surprising truths I tell,
While I the secrets of the deep reveal:
For hell is no enthusiastic dream,
No statesman's trick, nor poet's fab'lous theme;
No pious fraud, or mercenary lie
Of subtle priests to gain the conscience by.
'Tis all too sadly true which they maintain,
And far beyond whateler the poets feign.
Of streams of liquid fire, and burning lakes,
Infernal gibbets, and eternal racks,
Gorgons, chimeras, furies, and their snakes,
No mortal can a just conception frame,
Nor find for half the terrors here a name.
Then shun the flow'ry paths that downward tend;
To hell they lead, and in damnation end.
Fly from the snares of that enchanting sin,
Whose fatal joys have my perdition been.
Like thee, with all the pride of beauty gay,
In loose delights, I lately spent the day;
Like thee accomplish'd, and like thee admir'd,
My eyes the savage and polite inspir'd,
Whene'er I spoke, my wit new conquests won;
Thousands come here, by my soft airs undone,
With wild surprise, my alter'd looks they view,
And with loud curses still my flight pursue.
For learn, before too late, licentious fair,
Each face does here an equal horror wear,
And undistinguish'd youth and age appear.
Depriv'd of ev'ry charm, and ev'ry grace,
We all descend to this detested place.
Illustrious Helen, once the Grecian pride,
In folding shades her hated form would hide;
And conscious Thais stars to be descry'd.
I saw them lately by the trembling gleams,
The pale blue light of inauspicious flames;
No blushes paint their cheeks, their wanton eyes
No more with love's contagious darts surprise.
Rash Cleopatra mourns her hasty doom,
And glides a hideous spectre through the gloom,
Fam'd Julia thro' the crow'd's no longer known;

Ev'n Ovid's eyes [illegible]
Curs'd be the [illegible] day,
And lead my easy [illegible]
'Tis [illegible]
But thou [illegible]
Perfidious [illegible]
Its smooth [illegible]
Like Divers, [illegible]
To [illegible]
For thou, while [illegible]
To [illegible]
And should [illegible]
'Twould [illegible]

To Cleone.

From the [illegible], and happy fields above,
The [illegible]
Where joys [illegible]
All health [illegible]
For [illegible]
Nor [illegible]
For [illegible]
And [illegible]
And when [illegible]
From the [illegible]
Nil meet [illegible]
In [illegible]
Till thou [illegible]
And shining [illegible]
Their [illegible]
For [illegible]
And [illegible]

The [illegible]
And [illegible]